



Written Input Sought for the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council's Statewide Funding Strategy

Due Date: July 30, 1999

Written comment is once again being sought by the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council on its statewide motor vehicle theft prevention strategy and the programs it supports. As in past years, this input will be used to help identify and clarify issues or problem areas, effective approaches, needed legislative or regulatory remedies or any other information relevant to the vehicle theft problem in this State. This information will be the subject of special discussion panels convened by the Council in August 1999. This written input and the panel process will culminate in the development of a multi-year strategy. You are invited to submit written comments.

BACKGROUND

In 1990, the Illinois General Assembly took action against steadily rising auto theft rates by passing the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act - legislation crafted by an association of law enforcement and insurance industry officials called the Illinois Anti-Car Theft Committee.

The Act, which took effect on January 1, 1991, established the eleven-member Council and gave it the responsibility for managing a unique cooperative venture between business and government to curb motor vehicle theft in Illinois.

The Act requires all insurance companies licensed to write private passenger motor vehicle physical damage coverages in Illinois to pay annually into a special trust fund an amount equal to \$1.00 for each earned car year of exposure for physical damage insurance coverage (comprehensive coverage) during the previous calendar year. About \$5.6 million is collected each year.

In the past, the Council annually adopted a statewide motor vehicle theft prevention strategy that was derived from public hearings and data analyses. The strategy describes the nature and extent of the theft problem in Illinois, the areas of the state where the problem is greatest, problems the Council should focus on, and eligible kinds of programs the Council should support. The Council makes grant awards from the special trust fund to implement programs that are consistent with the statewide strategy.

Earlier this year, the Illinois General Assembly passed House Bill 2723, which extended the expiration date of the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act from 2000 to 2004. In light of this four-year extension, and the limited amount of funds available to the Council, the Council decided to adopt a multi-year strategy for calendar years 2000 - 2003.

WRITTEN COMMENTS

A critical part of the Council's deliberations on the Statewide Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Strategy this year will revolve around the fact that the costs associated with funded programs continue to increase, while the amount of Trust Funds available for them remains constant.

With this in mind, written comments are being sought on the development of a new strategy, the programs the Council currently funds, and possible new programs that the Council may want to support. This input will be used to identify issues or problem areas which may be the subject of special panels that will be convened by the Council later this year and may also be incorporated into the strategy document.

Specifically, the Council is seeking input on:

Identification of the geographic areas of greatest need;

Focus of the current strategy;

Objectives of the Statewide Strategy;

Eligible Program areas for funding; and

Focus of current programs.

Note: This is not a request for funding proposals. Please do not submit a grant application.

Written comments are requested regarding the areas listed below:

Geographic Areas of Greatest Need

The Council has focused its support on programs in five geographic areas of greatest need in terms of the nature and extent of the motor vehicle theft problem: the metropolitan areas of Chicago, East St. Louis, Joliet, Rockford, and Peoria.

Written comments are requested to assist in identifying whether the current geographic areas focused on are still areas of greatest need and identifying additional areas of need. Please provide data, i.e. numbers of auto thefts and recoveries, to support your comments.

Current Focus of Statewide Strategy

The current statewide motor vehicle theft prevention strategy is aimed at addressing the following problems:

1. The collection, analysis, accuracy, completeness and sharing of vehicle theft statistical data and criminal intelligence.
2. The traditionally fragmented and uncoordinated response of the criminal justice system to the motor vehicle theft problem.
3. Training of law enforcement, prosecutorial agencies, and others combating vehicle theft.
4. Limited law enforcement resources.
5. Motor vehicle theft enterprises in some areas of the State involve dealers of vehicles, parts, and scrap.
6. Insurance Fraud.
7. The complexity of criminal prosecutions.
8. Revised strategies to better fit youthful and habitual offenders.
9. The lack of public awareness of motor vehicle theft and the public's involvement in reduction and prevention efforts.

Written comments are being requested on the current focus, specifically, information regarding whether these issues have been addressed or still need to be addressed, and how; suggestions on ways to address these issues; identification of additional problems that need to be addressed. Please provide data to support your comments.

The Objectives of the Statewide Strategy

The objectives of the current statewide strategy are:

1. To reduce the number of motor vehicles stolen in the State;
2. To increase the number of stolen motor vehicles recovered;
3. To increase the percentage of offenses for violations of motor vehicle theft laws which result in arrests;
4. To increase the percentage of offenses for violations of motor vehicle theft laws which result in criminal prosecutions;
5. To increase the percentage of offenses for violations of motor vehicle theft laws which result in convictions and jail or prison sentences; and
6. To reduce the recidivism of motor vehicle theft offenders.

Written comments and data are requested regarding whether these objectives have been achieved; whether some or all of these objectives need to be modified or eliminated; whether additional objectives should be included.

Eligible Program Areas for Funding

Law enforcement - multi-jurisdictional task forces, special investigative programs, and specialized prosecution units.

The infrastructure supporting law enforcement efforts - the collection, analysis, and sharing of criminal intelligence information regarding motor vehicle theft; the development and implementation of training programs for law enforcement officers; training for state's attorneys and the judiciary; the development and implementation of training programs dealing with record keeping and theft prevention procedures aimed at vehicle related businesses and license-holders including salvage yards, rebuilders, recyclers, scrap processors, new and used car dealerships; and, building additional alliances with agencies and organizations involved in fighting vehicle theft and insurance fraud.

Public awareness - public education and prevention efforts which: inform owners about the financial and social consequences of motor vehicle theft; suggest methods for preventing such thefts; encourage the general public to report motor vehicle theft and related crimes; and highlight the work of task forces, special investigative activities and other efforts funded by the Council.

Evaluation and research - assessments of the administration and operation of funded programs as well as their impact on the motor vehicle theft problem; and, research supporting the identification and implementation of strategies for combating vehicle theft and insurance fraud.

Innovative programs - to encourage the development and implementation of creative and innovative approaches to respond to the motor vehicle theft problem in Illinois.

Written comments regarding current eligible areas of funding are requested. Written comments on possible additional areas that should be eligible for funding are also requested or current eligible program areas that should be eliminated.

The Focus of Current Programs

Since March of 1992 (when the first grant awards were made), the Council has awarded funds to 129 programs designed to combat motor vehicle theft in Illinois. The programs include:

- several special multi-jurisdictional law enforcement task forces around the State which include special prosecutors;
- a statewide auditing program focused on vehicle and parts-related businesses, and insurance pools throughout Illinois;

- a statewide law enforcement training program;
- a statewide specialized crime analysis and intelligence gathering clearinghouse;
- a strategic theft reduction program in the City of Chicago based on computer mapping;
- a program which diverts first-time, juvenile auto theft offenders into counseling and other referral services in Cook County;
- statewide public awareness and education programs known as "Project Park Smart," "Beat Auto Theft," and Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) etching;
- program evaluation projects; and,
- a research project studying career auto thieves to help formulate more effective strategies for dealing with them.

Written comments on the success and failures of current programs are requested. Include data that supports those comments.

How Trust Funds are Used

The Trust Funds awarded to date have been used chiefly to fund law enforcement personnel. A total of 154 persons are supported in the Council's grant programs during 1998. These personnel include:

- 96 investigators and auditors that perform sworn and civilian investigative functions;
- 12 assistant state's attorneys prosecuting motor vehicle theft and insurance fraud cases;
- 35 support personnel including data input operators, clerical support, and others; and
- 11 technical and professional positions including intelligence analysts, social workers, intake specialist and law clerks.

Written comments on how the trust funds are used are requested. Specifically, comments regarding the allocation of resources to support the above positions. Is that an appropriate allocation of resources? Are there better ways of accomplishing the objectives?

Additional Information

The Council also requests additional written comments on issues/problems that you or your agency faces in the area of auto theft. Comments should attempt to address the following:

Problem statement - The major problem(s) facing you or your agency with respect to motor vehicle theft in Illinois.

Data - Data that documents the nature and extent of the problem(s) identified.

Resources - The resources currently available to address the problem(s); identification of current funding sources and availability of matching funds; and an identification of existing services.

Approach - An explanation of why a particular approach to the problem(s) show(s) more promise than other approaches. Include a discussion of recent developments in law enforcement or other areas that affect efforts to combat motor vehicle theft.

Relation to Statewide Strategy - A discussion of the relation of the problem(s), resources, and approaches identified to the Council's statewide motor vehicle theft prevention strategy.

SUMMARY OF WRITTEN COMMENTS REQUESTED

In summary, the Council is seeking written comments in the following areas. Persons or entities wishing to comment may provide information on some or all of the areas. Please provide as much data as possible to support any comments, conclusions, problem statements, etc.

- *Written comments are requested to assist in identifying whether the current geographic areas focused on are still areas of great need and identifying additional areas of need. Please provide data, i.e. numbers of auto thefts and recoveries, to support your comments.*
- *Written comments are being requested on the current focus, specifically, information regarding whether these issues have been addressed or still need to be addressed, and how; suggestions on ways to address these issues; identification of additional problems that need to be addressed. Please provide data to support your comments.*
- *Written comments and data are requested regarding whether these objectives have been achieved; whether some or all of these objectives need to be modified or eliminated; whether additional objectives should be included.*
- *Written comments regarding current eligible areas of funding are requested. Written comments on possible additional areas that should be eligible for funding are also requested or current eligible program areas that should be eliminated.*
- *Written comments on the success and failures of current programs are requested. Include data that supports those comments.*
- *Written comments on how the trust funds are used are requested. Specifically, comments regarding the allocation of resources to support the above positions. Is that an appropriate allocation of resources? Are there better ways of accomplishing the objectives?*
- *Written comments on issues/problems that you or your agency faces in the area of auto theft.*

SUBMIT WRITTEN COMMENT TO:

Dr. Candice M. Kane
Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council
120 South Riverside Plaza, Suite 1016
Chicago, Illinois 60606-3997

DUE DATE:

July 30, 1999

For further information, contact the Council at (312) 793-8550 (TDD: 312-793-4170)