

# **A Profile of the Chicago Police Department Motor Vehicle Theft Data and Analysis Team Program**

---

---



---

---

*Prepared for*  
the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council

George Ryan, Governor  
Sam Nolen, Chairman

October, 2001



**ILLINOIS MOTOR VEHICLE  
THEFT PREVENTION COUNCIL**

---

---

## **Introduction**

In 1999, the Chicago Police Department Data and Analysis Team Program was awarded \$207,538 from the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council. The program proposed to provide information about motor vehicle theft to various divisions of the Chicago Police Department and other outside criminal justice agencies.

The City of Chicago lies in northeastern Illinois and had a population of 2,896,016 in 2000.<sup>1</sup> The Chicago area covers approximately 228 square miles and contains 77 communities. This report is based on information submitted by the data team, including quarterly data reports on offenses and arrests and the '2000 Application for Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Funding'.

## **Program Summary**

The data team produces statistical and tactical auto theft reports in Cook County by combining the expertise and resources of multiple divisions of the Chicago Police Department. This collective approach can maximize the team's ability to identify auto theft trends in the Chicago area.

The data team originally consisted of two research personnel, a data analyst and a researcher. During 2000, the data analyst left the employment of the Chicago Police Department and the salary funds are now used for contractual work performed by ESRI Software Company. ESRI is to develop a reporting system available to all CPD personnel and outside law enforcement agencies. Also during 2000, the researcher was relocated to the Chicago Police Department Headquarters, which makes automating the statistical and tactical reports and maps easier. The move allowed the researcher to benefit from resources available in the Chicago Police Department's Technology Center.

## **Proposed Program Activity<sup>2</sup>**

In the data team's 2000 Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Funding Application, the data and analysis team proposed to collect, analyze, and distribute auto theft data within the Chicago Police Department, as well as other law enforcement agencies throughout Illinois. The team also planned to review and analyze data that would identify auto theft trends and patterns throughout the 25 police districts of Chicago. This information was to be considered when deciding the distribution of auto theft resources within the City of Chicago.

---

<sup>1</sup> 2000 Census of Population, Bureau of the Census, U.S. Dept. of Commerce.

<sup>2</sup> The Chicago Police Department's Data and Analysis Team has not submitted monthly activity reports to the Council. The data included in this section is based on information from the '2000 Application for Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Funding' submitted by the data and analysis team on December 27, 2000.

---

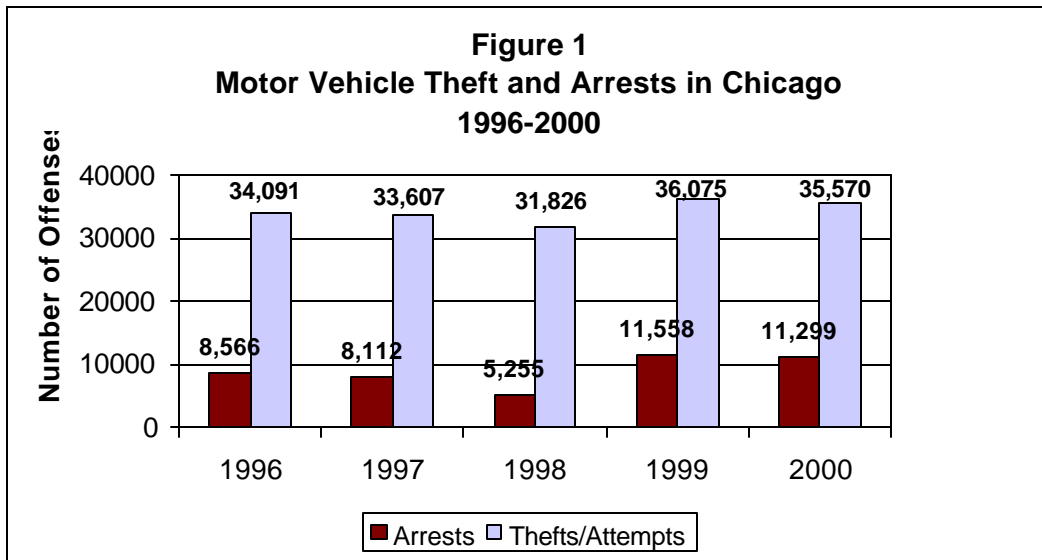
---

The data and analysis team also expected its work to reduce incidents of auto theft, improve auto theft clearance rates, and increase recoveries of stolen vehicles. Through collaboration and communication the team intended to establish partnerships between the Chicago Police Department's Auto Theft Section, the Research and Development's Technology Section, and the district tactical teams. The auto theft data would be provided to officers in the Auto Theft Section with information and resources relative to district tactical team training and assistance. The data and analysis team also proposed to develop greater awareness and support among community members in the auto theft prevention effort.

During 2001, the data team has reported that a method for tracking vehicle thefts at O'Hare Airport has been completed, which will allow the researchers to identify vehicle thefts in different parking lots and rental car locations.

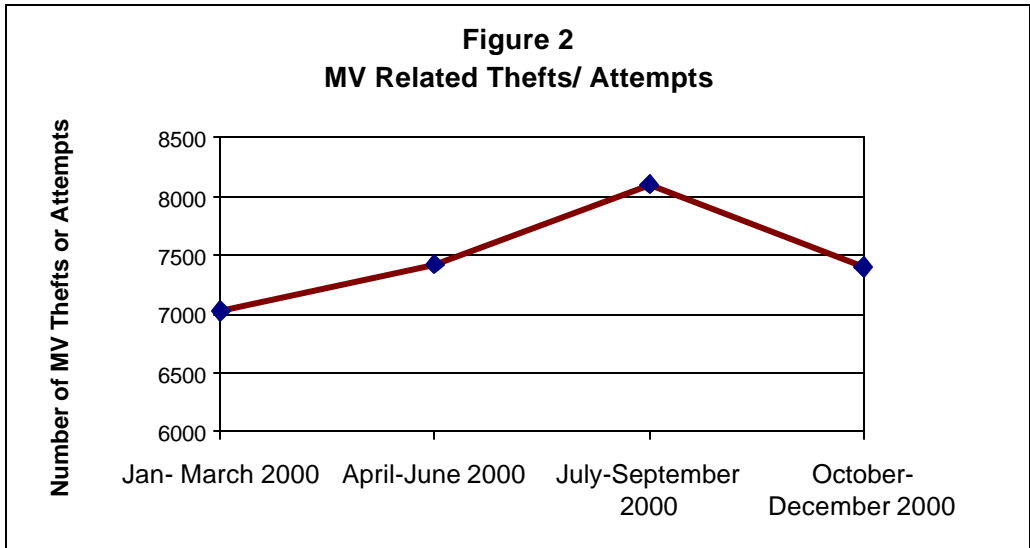
### Motor Vehicle Theft in the Chicago Area

Figure 1 shows the number of motor vehicle thefts and the number of motor vehicle related arrests in Chicago from 1996 to 2000. The red bars represent the actual number of motor vehicle theft arrests that occurred each year in Chicago and the blue bars report the number of thefts or attempted thefts that occurred each year. According to the Illinois State Police (ISP) 2000 crime statistics, the number of motor vehicle thefts in the Chicago area decreased 4.7 percent between 1999 and 2000 (from 36,075 to 35,570).



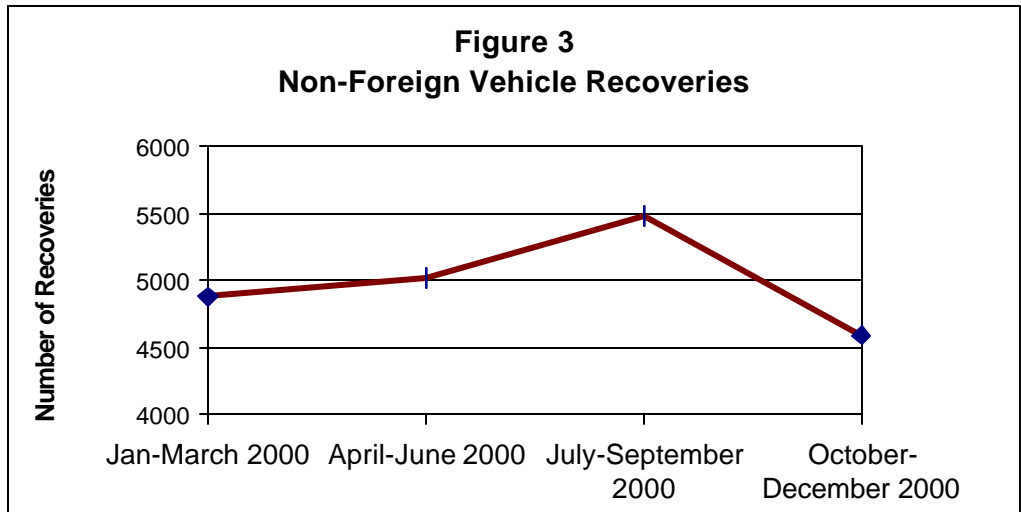
Source: Illinois State Police 2000.

Figure 2 reflects the 29,966 motor vehicle thefts and attempts reported by the data team for the year 2000 for the City Of Chicago. When comparing the data in Figure 1 and Figure 2, the number of motor vehicle theft and attempts reported by the data team is 5,604 less than the number of thefts and attempts recorded by the ISP. The reason for this discrepancy is unclear. It may be due to the use of different data systems or different classification and recording procedures between the two departments.



Source: CPD Data Reports, 2000.

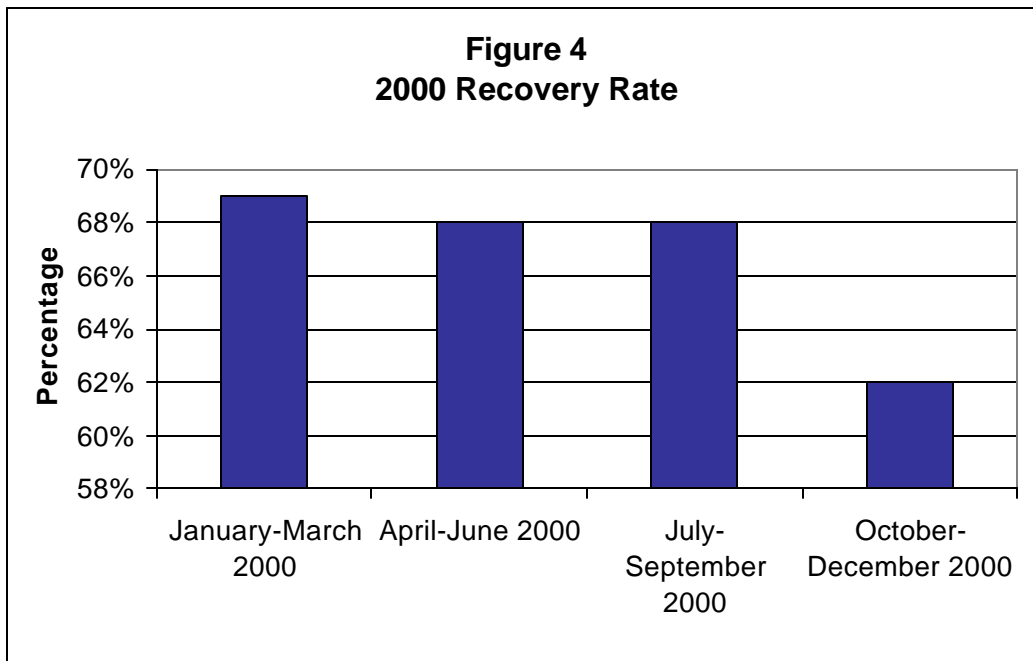
The data team found that the number of non-foreign vehicle recoveries during 2000 (Figure 3) was associated with the number of vehicle thefts and attempts. The offenses recorded in non-foreign vehicle recoveries include vehicles recovered by the Chicago Police Department that were originally reported and stolen in Chicago. Both Figure 2



Source: CPD Data Reports, 2000

---

and Figure 3 show similar patterns when comparing the number of thefts and recoveries. From June to September of 2000, the numbers show a gradual increase, but from September through December, the numbers begin to dramatically decrease. Figure 4 displays the recovery rate in Chicago for the year 2000. In addition, the data team reported that from January 2001 through June 2001, the recovery rate was approximately 61%.



Source: CPD Data Reports, 2000.

## Funding Summary

The Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act that took effect on January 1, 1991 created the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Council. The Council has the statutory responsibility to “prevent, combat, and reduce motor vehicle theft in Illinois.”<sup>3</sup>

The Act established the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund, a special trust fund in the State Treasury, from which the Council makes grants to eligible applicants for programs that address the problem of motor vehicle theft in Illinois. The Act requires all insurance companies licensed to write private passenger motor vehicle physical damage coverage in Illinois to pay annually into this trust fund an amount equal to \$1 for each earned car year of exposure for physical damage insurance coverage during the previous calendar year. About \$5.8 million is collected each year.

---

<sup>3</sup> The Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Act. 20 Illinois Compiled Statutes 4005.

---

---

The data team is funded by the Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund. Figure 5 lists the amount granted to the data team for each program year of its existence.

**Figure 5**  
**Data and Analysis Team**  
**Funding by Program Year**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Grant Amount</b>
1999	\$207,538
2000*	\$35,000
2001	\$120,490
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$363,028</b>

Source: CPD Data Reports, 2000.

\*The program agreement from 1999 was extended for a second year with a \$35,000 budget addition, which brought the two-year grant award total to \$242,538.

## **Conclusion**

Since the Data and Analysis Team began operation, vehicle thefts have declined within the Chicago area. The data team has received a total of \$363,028 in funding from the Illinois Motor Vehicle Theft Prevention Trust Fund. It is difficult, if not impossible, to determine what role the team played in the decline. The assumption is that the actions of the data team have contributed to the improvement in motor vehicle theft rates.