

# ARIZONA AUTOMOBILE THEFT AUTHORITY



ANNUAL REPORT  
2019



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# Director's Welcome

*The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority is committed to providing grant funding to public agencies in an effort to enhance law enforcement, prosecution, public awareness and education to reduce the occurrence of vehicle crimes in Arizona.*

Dear Governor Ducey, Senate President Fann, and House Speaker Bowers:

The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA) is pleased to present its 2019 Annual Report. Arizona reported 19,139 stolen vehicles in 2018; an increase of less than 1% from 2017 (19,058), and a \$161 million economic loss for the State of Arizona.

Once the highest state in the nation for vehicle theft rates, Arizona now enjoys placement outside the top ten. In 2018, Arizona ranked 11th in total number of vehicle thefts and 16th in the U.S. for the rate of thefts. While we're encouraged with the progress achieved, there is still much work to be done. What was once thought to be a property crime, is now seen for what it truly is, a crime that often facilitates egregious acts of violence, human trafficking, smuggling of contraband, and fraud. This insidious crime continues to pose a threat to our communities, residents and law enforcement throughout the state.

The AATA is a unique and successful blending of state resources and consumer funding. Our Agency is positioned to assist public agencies in addressing vehicle crimes by granting dollars to programs with a history of success in the fight against vehicle theft-related crime.

Ongoing challenges for Arizona remain our shared international border with Mexico as well as neighboring states with high auto theft rates. The AATA's current and future strategies emphasize agency grant funding priorities for border counties and communities to promote enforcement and prevention of vehicle crimes in these regions. These goals prioritize law enforcement and address border security; all while keeping administrative costs low.

On behalf of our dedicated staff, law enforcement and insurance industry partners, thank you for your continued support.

Respectfully,

James McGuffin  
AATA Executive Director





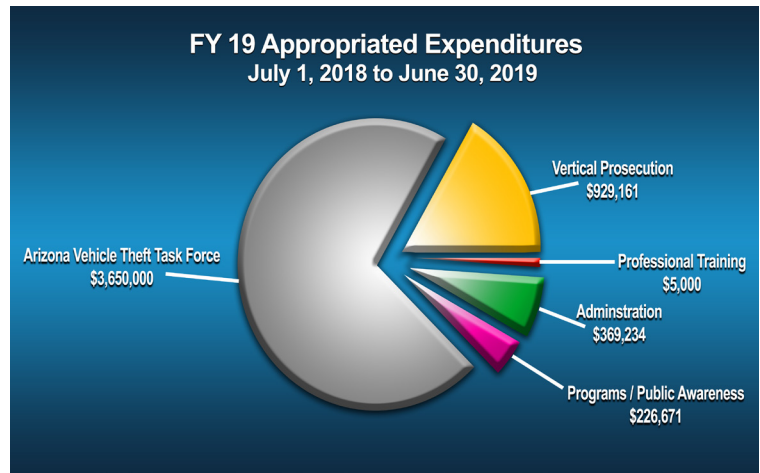
# Our Mission

The AATA's mission is to deter vehicle theft in Arizona through a cooperative effort by supporting law enforcement activities, vertical prosecution, and public education programs.

## Agency At-A-Glance

The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA) was established by the Arizona Legislature in 1992 to create a statewide effort to reduce auto theft. Per A.R.S. § 41-3451, the Agency is governed by a 12-member Board of Directors, appointed by statute, the Governor's Office and Arizona law enforcement organizations.

The AATA currently has a five-member staff responsible for administering the agency's mission and programs. We function as the lead agency in a statewide network of law enforcement, criminal justice, and crime prevention partners working together to combat vehicle crimes across Arizona. By focusing resources in these areas, the AATA and its statewide grantees and partners are impacting the state's vehicle theft rate.



The Agency is funded through semi-annual assessments of over 400 insurance companies writing auto policies in Arizona and receives no funding from the State's General Fund.

The AATA collects approximately \$6.2 million annually from the insurance industry. Nearly 95% of collected funds are issued for Law Enforcement, Vertical Prosecution and Public Awareness grant programs administered by AATA staff.

The Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force (VTTF) remains our largest grantee project at \$3,650,000 annually or 79% of the total budget for continued investigative and enforcement efforts. Remaining funds support the AATA's Vertical Prosecution and Law Enforcement grant programs.

The AATA administers the free, statewide *Watch Your Car* program, sponsors free VIN etching events, and numerous community & police-based prevention projects. Our message encourages the public to be diligent about practicing theft prevention and utilize a "multi-layered approach" to safeguard property.

In 2020 and beyond, the AATA will explore the feasibility of establishing a statewide database to compile information regarding vehicle theft. Currently, Arizona does not have a centralized crime records system for auto theft, thus requiring researchers and analysts to contact individual law enforcement agencies for vehicle theft-related intelligence and statistics.

The Agency will continue to expand cooperative efforts with other governmental agencies in Arizona and other states, Federal partners, Mexico, Canada, and other auto theft prevention authorities across the country to share information and coordinate efforts.

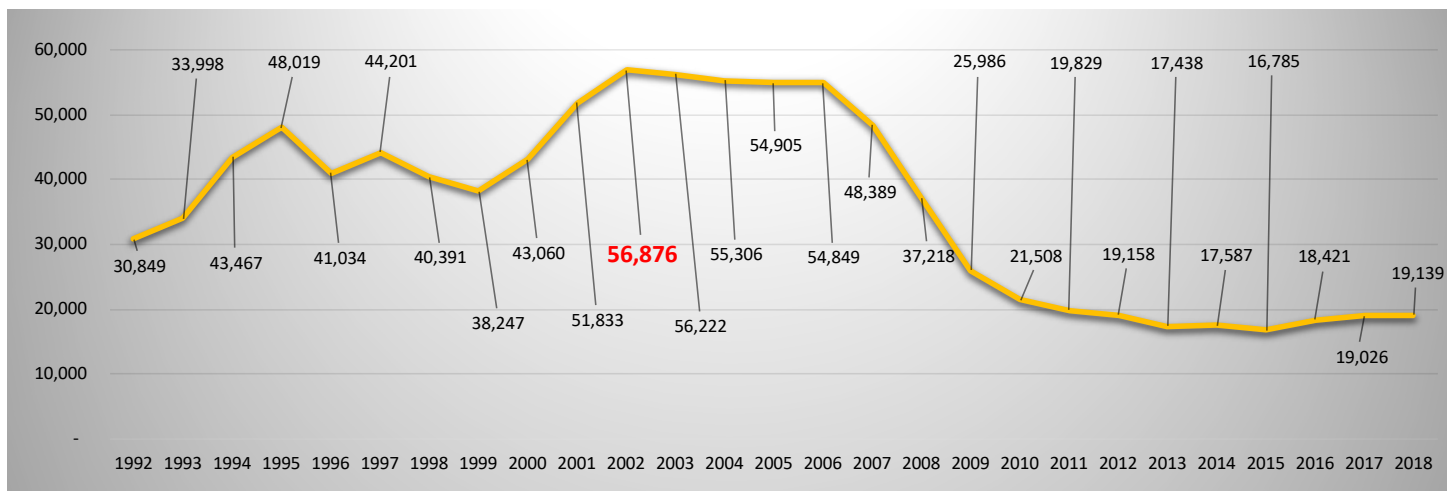
This year, the Arizona Legislature passed Senate Bill 1469, which takes effect July 1, 2020. The new legislation consolidates the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority (AATA), Department of Financial Institutions (DFI) and the Arizona Department of Insurance (DOI). The consolidated agency will be named the Department of Insurance and Financial Institutions (DIFI). Multi-agency transition plans are currently in progress as we prepare for July 1, 2020.

# Current Auto Theft Trends in Arizona & U.S.

Arizona reported 19,139 stolen vehicles in 2018; an increase of less than 1% from 2017 (19,058), and a \$161 million economic loss.

In 2018, Arizona ranked 11th in total number of vehicle thefts and 16th in the U.S. for the rate of vehicle thefts. Of the 19,139 vehicles stolen in Arizona in 2018, motor vehicle thefts in Maricopa and Pima counties accounted for 87% of total thefts. This high percentage is consistent with population centers in Arizona. The total number of vehicle thefts in Arizona has decreased by 38% from 1992 to 2018. Since 2002, Arizona's highest auto theft year, the total number of motor vehicle thefts in Arizona has decreased by 66.3%. The decline of vehicle theft numbers is even more impressive when the rapid growth of Arizona's population and corresponding increase in registered vehicles is considered.

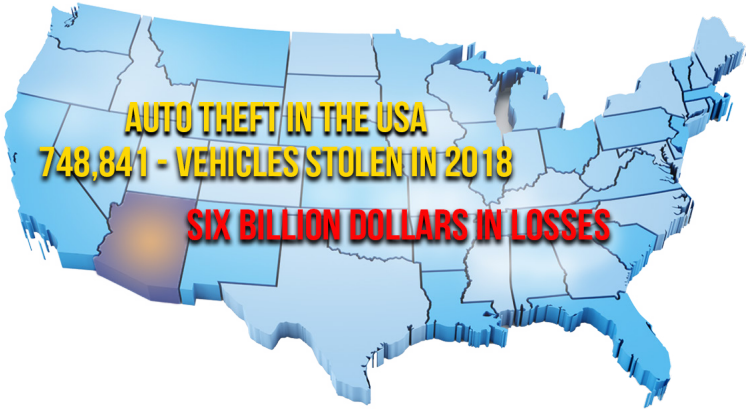
**AZ. Motor Vehicle Thefts 1992 - 2018**



Nationwide in 2018, there were an estimated 748,841 motor vehicle thefts, a decrease of 3.1% compared to 2017. The estimated rate of motor vehicle thefts (per 100,000 population), was 228.9; a 3.5% decrease from the previous year. Additionally, \$6.3 billion was lost nationwide to motor vehicle theft in 2018; the average dollar loss per stolen vehicle was \$8,407. In the U.S., the historic peak year for thefts was 1991, with 1,661,738 reported thefts. In 2018, the total was 748,841, a 54.94% reduction since 1991.

While some vehicles are stolen as a crime of opportunity for a thief to gain quick transportation, many are stolen by complex, professional theft rings whose tactics often involve violence, financial fraud, identity theft, and international trafficking. Many crime sprees begin with the theft of a vehicle, which leads to the dangerous and costly ripple effect of the subsequent crimes committed with that vehicle. Vehicle theft and associated crimes often turn violent and impact the quality of life for Arizona communities, law enforcement, residents and visitors to Arizona.

# Arizona's U.S. Rankings



**11th** for total number of stolen vehicles

**16th** for vehicle theft rate (thefts per 100,000 residents)

Ongoing challenges for Arizona remain our shared international border with Mexico as well as our proximity to neighboring states with high auto theft rates.

Criminals facilitating unlawful activities are rarely burdened by the borders between states. Experience demonstrates that criminal activity affecting one state will likely spill over to neighboring states to some degree. The graphic below shows the vehicle theft rankings by rate of vehicle theft (thefts per 100,000 residents) for Arizona and the five surrounding states. As highlighted, four of the five surrounding states currently rank higher than Arizona. The AATA feels it is prudent to assume vehicle theft has a stronghold on southwestern states and Arizona's current ranking may be in jeopardy of worsening.

Rate of Stolen Vehicles by States	
New Mexico	485.8
California	392.4
Nevada	392.3
Colorado	380.5
Arizona	266.9
Utah	244.5



In 2018, Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR) units recorded 484 stolen vehicles from Arizona as they crossed into Mexico. The Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force "Border Squad" works with Mexican officials and members of the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB) to locate U.S. stolen vehicles in Mexico. In 2019, VTTF repatriated 186 stolen vehicles from Mexico with an estimated value of \$2.8 million.

# 2018 Hot Spots Report

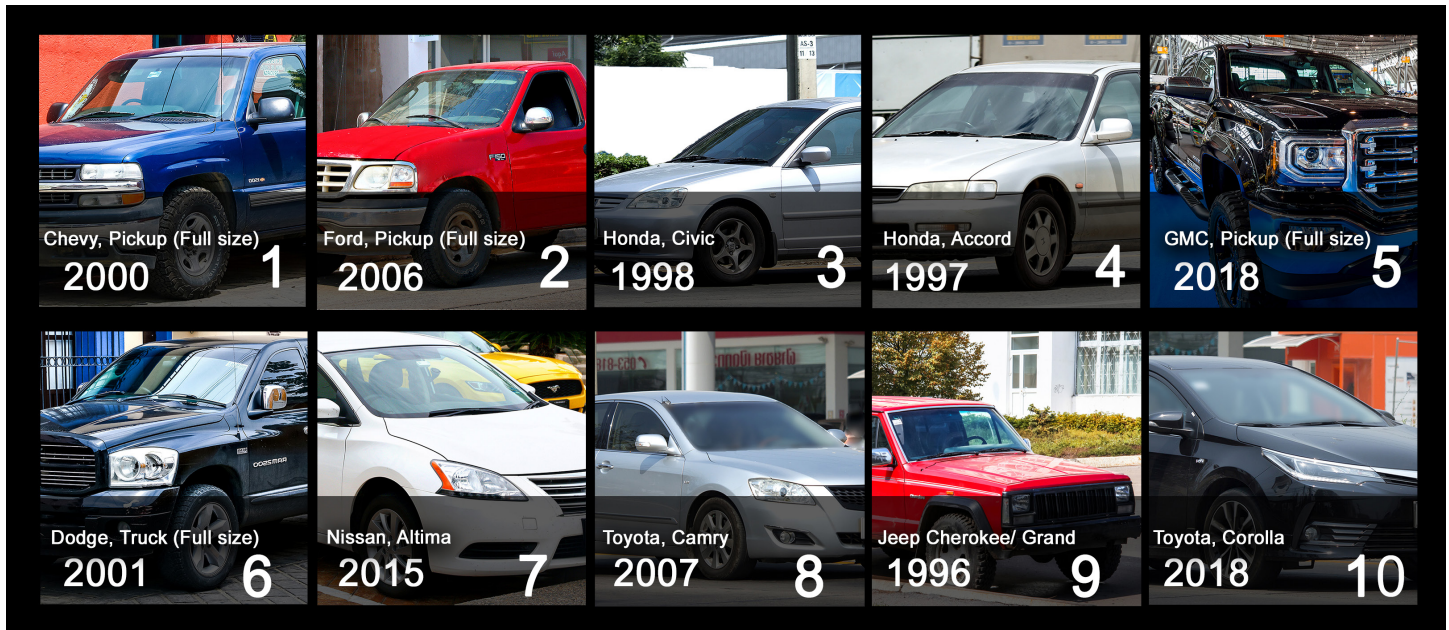


According to the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), five out of the ten MSA's (Metropolitan Statistical Area), with the highest theft rates were in California. The Phoenix MSA, once ranked the #1 "Hot Spot" for auto theft just over 15 years ago, plunged down the list to #98. Tucson, which previously held the #2 spot, is now #61.

Rank	United States MSA's	2018 Thefts	2018 Rate
1	Albuquerque, NM Metropolitan Statistical Area	7,146	780.19
2	Anchorage, AK Metropolitan Statistical Area	3,087	773.40
3	Bakersfield, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	6,748	752.48
4	Pueblo, CO Metropolitan Statistical Area	1,175	701.37
5	Modesto, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	3,428	623.48
6	Redding, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	1,037	575.98
7	Stockton-Lodi, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	4,287	569.58
8	Wichita, KS Metropolitan Statistical Area	3,547	550.02
9	Vallejo-Fairfield, CA Metropolitan Statistical Area	2,404	538.28
10	St. Joseph, MO-KS Metropolitan Statistical Area	674	532.85
<b>Arizona MSA's</b>			
61	Tucson, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area	3,574	343.96
98	Phoenix-Mesa-Scottsdale, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area	13,469	277.26
108	Lake Havasu City-Kingman, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area	559	266.76
121	Yuma, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area	539	254.09
282	Flagstaff, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area	165	115.50
295	Sierra Vista-Douglas, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area	131	103.34
333	Prescott, AZ Metropolitan Statistical Area	183	78.88



# Arizona's Most Stolen Vehicles



## Most Stolen Vehicles in the Nation

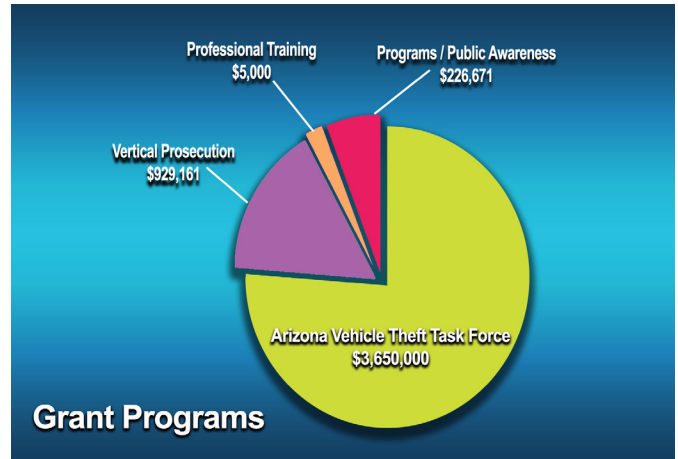
Rank	Make/Model	Veh. Year
1	Honda Civic	2000
2	Honda Accord	1997
3	Ford Pickup (Full Size)	2006
4	Chevrolet Pickup (Full Size)	2004
5	Toyota Camry	2017
6	Nissan Altima	2017
7	Toyota Corolla	2017
8	GMC Pickup (Full Size)	2018
9	Dodge Pickup (Full Size)	2001
10	Jeep Cherokee/Grand Cherokee	2000

# 2019 AATA Grant Programs

The purpose of AATA grant programs is to provide funding to public agencies throughout the state for law enforcement, prosecution, public awareness activities and training.

The AATA currently has five major grant programs, which include the Vehicle Theft Task Force (VTTF), Vertical Prosecution, Law Enforcement, Professional Training and Public Awareness. The programs are intended to reduce the number of vehicle thefts through law enforcement efforts and to educate the public on how to protect their vehicles more effectively.

Currently, the AATA dedicates the majority of its funding in three counties, Maricopa, Pima and Pinal. Statistics demonstrate a consistent history (91% in 2018) of auto thefts in Arizona occur in these three counties. However, auto theft creates victims throughout all Arizona counties, creating a need for additional law enforcement and outreach efforts across the state.



## Law Enforcement Grant Programs

Law Enforcement grants from the AATA fund valuable equipment and technology used with great advantage by law enforcement agencies in their jurisdictions to deter and reduce auto theft and related criminal activity. These grants are also a very effective means of placing resources in smaller and more rural areas of the state, such as the communities near the international border and along the Colorado River. The AATA is able to concentrate those limited resources in areas with the greatest need.

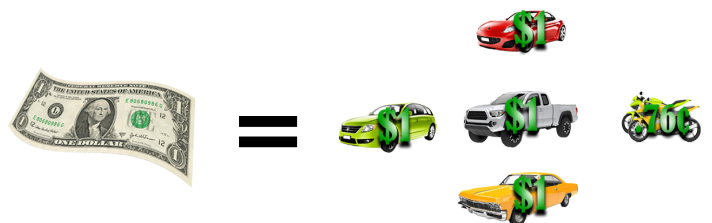
## Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force

A critical strategy in the AATA’s mission is to support proactive law enforcement activities throughout Arizona. The AATA partners with the Arizona Department of Public Safety (AZDPS) by funding the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force (VTTF), which is the AATA’s largest annual grantee (\$3.65 million - 79.5% of AATA’s annual grant budget).

The VTTF is administered and led by AZDPS and is deployed as a statewide resource comprised of multiple law enforcement partners working in a coordinated effort to leverage human and capital resources to disrupt, dismantle, apprehend and incarcerate individuals and criminal organizations that profit from vehicle theft-related crimes. The VTTF also provides technical expertise, training, investigative and analytical support to law enforcement agencies targeting crimes surrounding the theft and trafficking of motor vehicles.

The VTTF is comprised of four regional teams of sworn investigators from various law enforcement agencies and other professional staff personnel who perform vital support services. The VTTF also engages in public awareness and education programs to prevent and deter vehicle theft and fraud.

In FY19, the VTTF returned \$4.76 for every \$1 spent to administer the program.



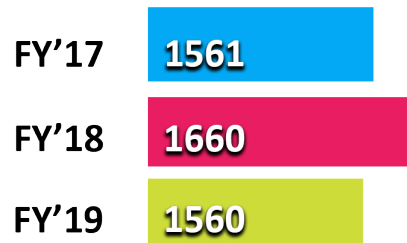


# AZ Vehicle Theft Task Force Results

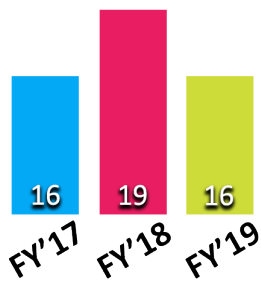


Estimated value of recovered vehicles  
**\$20,521,963**

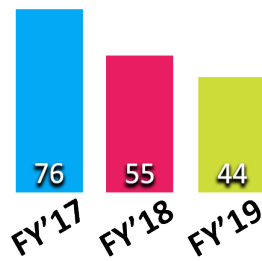
## Recovered Stolen Vehicles



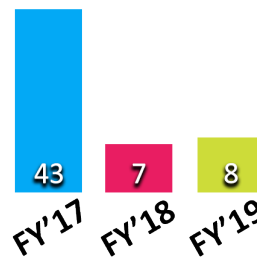
### Chop Shops Investigated



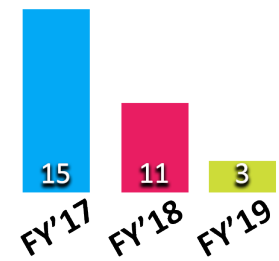
### Altered/ Switched VIN's



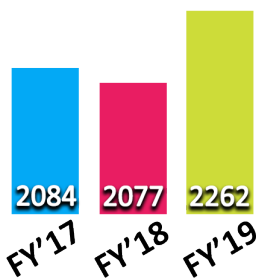
### Business Inspections



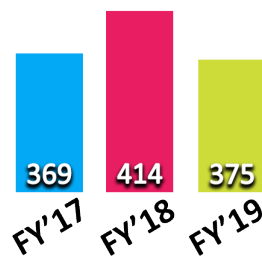
### Insurance Fraud Cases



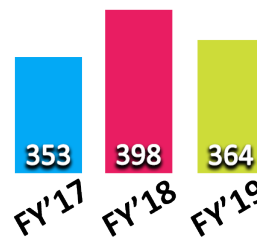
### Assist to Other Agencies



### Felony Arrests Totals



### Felony Arrests Adults



### Felony Arrests Juveniles



# FY19 VTTF Case Highlights



November 14, 2018 - VTTF Phoenix detectives authored a search warrant after they located a stolen vehicle at a residence in Phoenix with numerous vehicles in different stages of dismantlement in the backyard. VTTF detectives recovered ten stolen vehicles, seized two semi-auto handguns and a shotgun. Two suspects were charged with operating a chop shop and ten counts of theft of means of transportation.

February 14, 2019 - VTTF Phoenix detectives received information on a 2001 Ford F250 stolen from Gilbert Arizona. VTTF detectives located the vehicle in the area of 51st Avenue and Baseline and initiated surveillance. AZDPS Ranger (helicopter) assisted with the surveillance. VTTF detectives coordinated with Gila River Police when the suspect drove onto the reservation and almost struck an unmarked VTTF vehicle and detective while attempting to deploy stop sticks. At that time, the stolen vehicle fled into the desert with detectives pursuing. With the assistance of AZDPS Ranger, AZDPS SWAT and Goodyear PD K9, detectives took the suspect and two female passengers in custody after the stolen vehicle struck a tree while driving in thick brush. The suspect was booked on theft of means of transportation, aggravated assault, endangerment, possession of personal use marijuana and dangerous drugs, and felony flight. The two female passengers were booked on active misdemeanor warrants.

May 2, 2019 - VTTF Pima detectives became aware of a fraud scheme by a female who committed identity theft spanning several counties. The female suspect, who served two years in the Arizona Department of Corrections for forgery in 2017, stole the identities of several women and used these identities to buy or fraudulently rent vehicles. Nine victims and seven vehicles were identified as being involved in the scheme at the onset. On May 6, VTTF detectives arrested the suspect and served search warrants. During the investigation, it was determined this was the same suspect a VTTF detective was looking for from a case in November 2018 where the suspect failed to return a rented 2018 Jaguar. The 2018 Jaguar vehicle was located in San Diego, where during the course of a police pursuit, the suspect struck a San Diego motor officer. A total of 52 victims of identity theft were identified, and nine stolen vehicles were recovered with two stolen vehicles still outstanding.

June 25, 2019 - VTTF Phoenix detectives alerted by the Arizona Highway Patrol, located and started surveillance on a stolen Mercedes AMG valued at \$155,000. VTTF detectives surveilled the stolen Mercedes to a residence in Gilbert, which led to the location of a stolen Aston Martin DB11 with an estimated value of \$249,000. The suspects then drove the Aston Martin to another residence in Phoenix, where another stolen Aston Martin was parked. Two suspects were taken into custody and booked on theft of means of transportation and fraudulent schemes.

June 30, 2019 - VTTF Phoenix detectives were deployed for an occupied stolen vehicle. VTTF detectives surveilled the vehicle to a neighborhood in east Mesa, where the suspects were seen driving with no lights and checking doors to vehicles. AZDPS Ranger (helicopter) arrived in the area and spooked the suspects to leave the area. The suspects were followed to west Phoenix, where they entered a different vehicle. When VTTF detectives attempted to stop the suspect vehicle, the driver put the vehicle in reverse and backed into a VTTF detective's vehicle. The VTTF detectives were able to safely contain the vehicle, and four suspects were taken into custody. VTTF detectives found four semi-auto handguns, two of which were reported stolen. All four suspects were booked for theft of means of transportation and weapons violations.



# 2019 Vertical Prosecution Grant Programs

The AATA has identified vertical prosecution as a vital component of a comprehensive auto theft reduction strategy for Arizona. The Vertical Prosecution program has been an extremely successful approach to reinforce the efforts of the VTTF, and other auto theft detectives. The AATA currently supports vertical prosecution in six counties throughout the state: Maricopa, Pima, Pinal, Mohave, La Paz and Santa Cruz. The AATA funded \$930,942 for the program in FY19. The Vertical Prosecution Program remains the agency’s second largest annual grant program, comprising nearly 20% of the Agency’s annual grant budget.

Vertical prosecution is a model where the same attorney handles the case from beginning to end (charging to sentencing). This type of prosecution is very effective; the attorneys are highly trained and participating prosecutors report that sentences for violent offenders tend to be longer when this strategy is deployed. The table below shows the results for the FY19 Vertical Prosecution Grant program:

FY 19 Vertical Prosecution Results	Number/ Dollar
Auto theft cases charged	1,731
Felony convictions	1,309
Plea agreements	1,394
Restitution ordered	\$1,261,972
Avg. prison sentence- (non-repeat offenders)	6.5 years
Avg. probation sentence - (non-repeat offenders)	3.0 years

## Vertical Prosecution Case Highlights

The following case highlights demonstrate the significance of AATA grant funds for specialized auto theft prosecutors, working alongside law enforcement to bring forth successful indictments and convictions.

### Maricopa County Attorney’s Office - State v. Scott Duran

On June 9, 2019, Scott Duran stole a truck while the victim was saying goodbye to his girlfriend at the Sky Harbor Airport Terminal 4 drop-off. Duran then drove through the airport to the other side of the terminal and successfully stole another vehicle while that victim was dropping off her friend. The victim’s 5-year-old son was in the vehicle. Phoenix Police were able to locate the vehicle before it left the airport. The vehicle had been traveling 40-50 mph, ran a stop sign and did not yield when the officer attempted a traffic stop. When they came to an area where the traffic was congested, the officer was able to position his patrol car at an angle in front of the stolen vehicle forcing it to stop. The officer then removed Duran from the vehicle through the driver’s window and took him into custody, finding a knife concealed in his waistband. Duran was charged with kidnapping, a Class 2 felony and dangerous crimes against children, theft of means of transportation, a Class 3 felony, attempted theft of means of transportation, a Class 4 felony, unlawful flight from law enforcement, a Class 5 felony, and endangerment, a Class 6 felony. Duran had one prior felony conviction from 2012; he ultimately plead guilty and was sentenced to seven years in the Department of Corrections.



Scott Duran

### **Pima County Attorney's Office – State v. Roman Carrasco**

On January 14, 2019, detectives from the Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force (VTTF) conducted surveillance at an apartment complex in Tucson. They watched as Roman Carrasco and an unidentified male loaded a speaker into a double-parked car, which was later identified as a stolen 2005 Honda Accord. The car was recovered by the VTTF, but no arrest was made that day.

The next day, a stolen Honda Civic was located at the same apartment complex. This time, Carrasco was observed driving the car, which he drove to another location where he and his passenger, Christina Hunt, were detained. The stolen Civic had a fictitious plate on it. Detectives also recovered a Smith and Wesson .380 handgun under the driver's seat. Carrasco was found to have a "shaved" key on his person and admitted he believed the car could have been "hot" or stolen. Detectives obtained a search warrant for Carrasco's apartment where they found numerous items believed to be from car burglaries. Ultimately, Carrasco was charged with theft of means of transportation (x2), burglary in the third degree (x2), possession of burglary tools, and trafficking in stolen property. Carrasco was released on this case over the State's objection.

On June 30th, an 89 year-old victim, who was carrying in groceries when someone she described as a short male in a blue hat was driving off with her Honda Fit. It should be noted that Carrasco is only 5'5".

On July 4, 2019, Tucson Police received a 911 call from a concerned citizen about suspicious activity. A Tucson Police patrol officer observed as a short male tried to break into a Honda Fit. The officer approached and the male identified himself as Carrasco, stating the Honda Fit was actually his car, but he just locked himself out. He then changed his story to say that it was his friend's car. The officer asked Carrasco to wait on the curb, but he instead took off running. Inside the car, officers located a tablet with the name Roman Carrasco on the lock screen and a wallet with his identification inside.

Detectives from the VTTF believed Carrasco to be part of a larger auto theft ring. Throughout the summer of 2019, Carrasco was the subject of biweekly Vehicle Theft Task Force meetings with prosecutors, and was able to be taken into custody without incident.

On September 30, 2019, Carrasco plead guilty to two counts of theft of means of transportation, while admitting two historical prior convictions. On November 19, he was sentenced to ten years on one count and nine years on the second count, to run concurrently, in the Department of Corrections. Restitution was ordered as requested by the victims and their insurance companies.

This is a great example of the collaboration and importance of the Vehicle Theft Task Force and a Vertical Prosecution program. Through this collaboration, Carrasco was able to be brought swiftly to justice and will not be victimizing anyone for the next ten years.



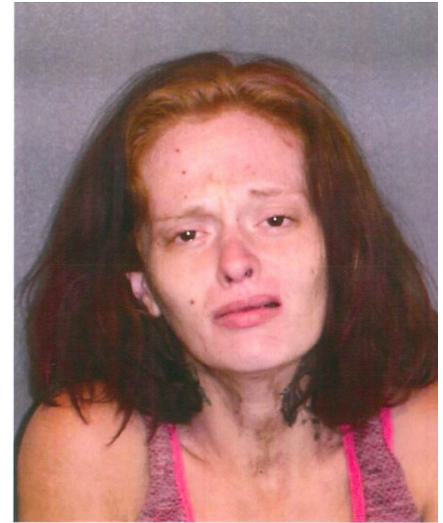
Roman Carrasco



### **Mohave County Attorney's Office - State v. Hicks, Merriam, Pizzo, & Ryan**

This case involved four defendants and three stolen trucks. The main defendants, Ryan and Hicks, were targeting Ford F-250s due to their ability to start the vehicles without keys. The first vehicle was stolen in California. Hicks and Ryan drove that vehicle to Kingman where they met Pizzo and Merriam and the four of them stole another F-250, before driving to Golden Valley where Hicks and Ryan stole a third F-250. The plan was for the two pairs to go their separate ways back to California once they got separate vehicles. Both vehicles ended up wrecked in washes outside of Golden Valley.

Pizzo and Merriam's cases have resolved. They had minor prior records and lesser culpability so they received probation. Hicks is still pending, her plea is for prison only as she has several prior felony convictions. MCSO and Kingman PD did a thorough investigation by following up leads and all but Ryan were apprehended within hours of the second theft report.



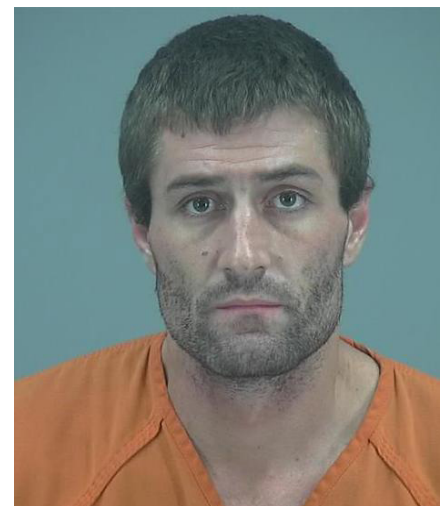
Hicks

### **Pinal County Attorney's Office – State v. Michael Schraeder**

This case involved the prosecution of a serial bank robber turned carjacker, Michael Schraeder, who walked into a Great Western Bank in Casa Grande disguised with a baseball hat and a large neck brace. He went straight to a bank teller and pushed a note towards her. He then yelled, "Give me the cash! Hurry-hurry!" The bank teller gave Mr. Schraeder thousands of dollars in cash, who ran out of the bank, however, his getaway driver had abandoned him and he was forced to take flight on foot.

A Casa Grande Police officer was in the area and saw Mr. Schraeder running away through a nearby Lowe's parking lot. The officer chased after the suspect, who began to shed his disguise and money during the pursuit. Desperate to escape, Schraeder ran up to a 68-year old woman's Jeep and jumped in the driver's seat while she was sitting in the passenger seat waiting for her husband who was inside the store. Schraeder grabbed the gearshift, stomped on the gas and struggled to put the Jeep into gear. The victim, however, was able to remove her key from the ignition after a brief struggle with Schraeder. With the officer pursuing, Schraeder abandoned the Jeep and again fled on foot until the officer was able to tackle him at the Lowe's entrance.

At the time of this offense, Schraeder had six prior felony convictions and four prior bank robberies. He had violated his terms of probation and was robbing banks to gather enough money to flee to Mexico with his girlfriend. On May 2, 2019, the Schraeder was sentenced to serve a term of 20 years in prison for his crimes, including the attempted carjacking.



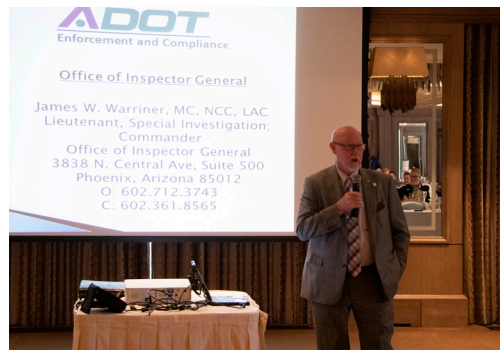
Michael Schraeder

# Professional Training Support

To increase knowledge and remain current with vehicle theft trends, the AATA supports training for its law enforcement partners. Training conferences with the Arizona Auto Theft Investigators Association (AATIA) and the International Association of Auto Theft Investigators (IAATI) are critical to staying abreast of criminal methods, trends and other intelligence. The networking offered at these conferences is invaluable for both police officers and prosecutors to compare notes and experiences on current trends and best practices to combat them.

In FY19, the AATA issued one Professional Training grant for \$5,000 to support the PISA (Policia Internacional Sonora Arizona) Conference in Tucson. Additional training grants were awarded in the amount of \$16,011 under the (non-appropriated) SIMS Metal Management Court Settlement fund from 2011, which has now been depleted.

This year, the AATA, AATIA and International Association of Special Investigation Units (IASIU, AZ. Chapter), co-hosted the 2019 Auto & Metal Theft Summit in Flagstaff. Over 150 attendees received training on auto theft investigations, current and legal aspects of scrap metal procedures, search warrants, business inspections and insurance fraud.





# AATA Public Awareness Grant Programs

The AATA also provides grant funding and resource support to law enforcement agencies across the state to implement and sustain community-based public awareness programs, including providing free services for VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) etching on window glass.

This year, the AATA issued Public Awareness Grants in the amount of \$9,750 to the following agencies for new VIN Insta-Etch equipment and supplies, along with free theft prevention materials for agency activities and event support:

Bullhead City Police Department  
Camp Verde Marshal's Office  
Casa Grande Police Department  
Eloy Police Department  
Sierra Vista Police Department  
St. Johns Police Department



# AATA Theft Prevention Programs

The AATA recognizes that effective public awareness campaigns are important components in the overall effort to reduce vehicle theft in Arizona. Public education and awareness are intended to promote behavioral changes that will lessen the chance of a person becoming a victim of vehicle theft. Public outreach, with a clearly understood message, is critical to the success of any crime prevention initiative.

The goal of public awareness is to educate Arizona citizens in understanding the significance of vehicle theft and learn to safeguard their cars from theft. Very simply, vehicle theft, and vehicle burglary, are generally considered to be preventable crimes. Vehicle owners play an important role in safeguarding their vehicles from theft or burglary.

The Arizona Automobile Theft Authority will continue to engage in a variety of public awareness methods including, Social Media Marketing (SMM), attending public events, Block Watch/Neighborhood safety meetings, as well as law enforcement sponsored VIN etching events.

In November, the AATA launched a "Lock It or Lose It" Holiday Theft Prevention Billboard Campaign in the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas, where 87% of the state's auto thefts occur. The goal of the campaign is to provide awareness to Arizonans about the significance of vehicle theft and learn ways to safeguard their vehicles and property.



AATA Outreach staff participated in 44 events throughout the year, ten more than last year, which included multiple VIN etching events, GAIN events, community safety presentations, regional conferences and trainings, and a community meeting hosted by Phoenix City Councilwoman, Thelda Williams.

The AATA's Outreach Coordinator also traveled to 12 cities including San Luis, Quartzsite, St. Johns, Coolidge, Sierra Vista, Eloy, Casa Grande, Bullhead City, and Flagstaff. We strengthened relationships with Maricopa, Glendale, El Mirage, Phoenix, and Yuma Police Departments.



## Watch Your Car Program

The *Watch Your Car* program is one element of a “layered approach” to protection recommended by the AATA to effectively deter vehicles from being stolen. The *Watch Your Car* program is a FREE, voluntary enrollment program designed to deter vehicle theft, assist in the recovery of stolen vehicles, and apprehend auto thieves. After enrolling and signing an application form, participants in the program affix *Watch Your Car* decals to their vehicle, which authorizes law enforcement officials to stop the vehicle between the program hours of 1:00 AM and 5:00 AM, when most vehicle thefts occur, or within one mile of the international border. Enrollment forms are obtained by contacting the AATA by phone or accessing the Agency’s web site at [www.azwatchyourcar.com](http://www.azwatchyourcar.com). The *Watch Your Car* program is available to all citizens with cars registered in the State of Arizona.



To promote the *Watch Your Car* program along with proactive auto theft prevention tips, the AATA partners with law enforcement agencies throughout Arizona and participates in auto theft prevention events and safety fairs as well as homeowners association and Block Watch meetings. As of December 2019, the AATA has 15,000 vehicles enrolled in the program.

## VIN Etching Program

VIN etching involves permanently etching the vehicle identification number into the window glass of the vehicle, making the vehicle less valuable to thieves who may want to steal it. This also acts as a deterrent to chop shop operators and provides a valuable method for law enforcement to identify vehicles that have been VIN switched or cloned. The AATA provides grant funding for VIN etching equipment and supplies needed to perform this service. The AATA owns equipment and regularly shares with law enforcement agencies across the state. The AATA also sponsors VIN etching events that are conducted by agency staff and volunteers.

## Annual Auto Theft Prevention Month in March

In March 2019, the AATA co-hosted the annual Auto Theft Prevention & Awareness Month kick-off event with Eloy, Casa Grande, and Coolidge Police Departments by offering free VIN etching and theft prevention resources to increase awareness to Pinal County residents. Events are posted on social media and the AATA’s website - <https://aata.az.gov/upcoming-events>.

# Social Media Messaging

Currently, the AATA has accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Ads are created within the agency to promote the AATA's current marketing campaigns, as well as generate public awareness of proactive safety measures against vehicle theft and burglaries.



## Tailgate Theft – “Watch Your Tail” Campaign

Recent reports from the National Insurance Crime Bureau (NICB), show a national trend continuing across the U.S. in the theft of pick-up truck and SUV tailgates. Tailgates can be easily stolen in less than 30 seconds, making them prime targets for theft. With replacement costs reaching \$1,300 or more, it makes sense for pickup owners to make their tailgates less attractive to thieves. To protect from thieves, there are numerous anti-theft tailgate locking devices available. In the last few years, the AATA launched a “Watch Your Tail” campaign, featuring a Do-it-Yourself method using a 1-inch metal hose clamp. Other theft preventive measures include parking indoors and backing up against a wall or other impediment when parking.

The top five states for tailgate thefts: Texas, California, Florida, Arizona, and Nevada. The top five cities for tailgate thefts: Houston, Dallas, San Antonio, Los Angeles, and Fresno.

## #9PMRoutineAZ

In Arizona, the majority of vehicle and home burglaries are CRIMES of OPPORTUNITY and too many vehicles are left unlocked with valuables inside during overnight hours. Criminals targeting our vehicles are not after a specific item, but rather any item(s) that may be of value.

The AATA continues to promote the *9PM Routine*, a nightly reminder to remove valuables out of vehicles and ensure ALL doors and windows are locked, including home and garage areas. The goal of the *9PM Routine* is to combat auto thefts and break-ins and help empower citizens to develop their own personal security routines by having a designated time to perform these tasks every night at 9PM.

# Financial Report

## For the Year Ended June 30, 2019

### **Arizona Automobile Theft Authority Fund**

The Automobile Theft Authority Fund is a special revenue fund, which was established by the Arizona Legislature and is the only operating fund of the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority. The AATA does not receive any tax dollars or appropriations from the General Fund of the State of Arizona. All revenues received by the Authority, including investment income and monetary gifts, are deposited in the Automobile Theft Authority Fund, with the exception of court ordered awards. Expenditures of the Authority are appropriated by the Legislature and paid from collected monies in the Fund. The financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 of the AATA have been audited by the accounting firm of Heinfeld, Meech & Co., P.C., Certified Public Accountants in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and government auditing standards. Their report gave an unmodified opinion of the Authority's financial statements.

### **Revenue**

The revenue of the AATA is derived from a statutory semi-annual assessment of fifty cents per vehicle insured under a motor vehicle liability insurance policy issued by the insurer. Current year revenue collections from insurance assessments for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019 were \$ 6,542,544, an increase of \$214,879 or 3.39% from the prior year. All excess cash is invested with the State Treasurer and the Authority earned \$112,283 in investment income during the current fiscal year.

### **Expenditures**

Total expenditures for the current year were \$5,196,077, a decrease of \$15,951 from the total expenditures from the previous year of \$5,212,028. Administrative expenses of the Authority are limited by statute and are not to exceed 10% of the revenue collected by the Authority. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019, the Authority was in compliance with this statute with costs of administration being 5.55%, of the monies in the fund as verified by the audit. The AATA's administrative costs as a percent of total expenditures for the fiscal year were 7.12%. The AATA ended the year with investments in the amount of \$4,371,694 with the State Treasurer.

### **Revenue Forecast**

The AATA reviewed and analyzed the revenue collection trends for the previous five years in determining revenue projections. There are two collection periods per fiscal year. As the population of the state has continued to grow, the revenue collected by the AATA has also continued to grow. For the fiscal year ending June 30, 2020 (FY20), the agency projects revenue growth of 3.00% (over the previous year), this means that the anticipated revenue in FY20 from insurance collections should be approximately \$6,738,821, (\$196,277 above the revenue received in the FY19). Going forward, the agency expects revenue to increase at the 3.00% rate for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021 (FY21), with a projected revenue of \$6,940,985. The AATA reviews each assessment submitted by an insurance company and verifies statutory compliance.



# Arizona Auto Theft Authority Fund

## Statement of Operations by Program for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2019

	June 30, 2018	June 30, 2019
<b>Revenue</b>		
Current Year Collections	\$6,327,665	\$6,542,544
Prior Year Collections	-	-
Investment Income	48,547	112,283
Grants	-	-
Refund of Unused Grant Funds/Miscellaneous Income	1,905	-
Total Cash Collections	<u>6,378,117</u>	<u>6,654,827</u>
Change in Revenues Accrued	210,943	70,295
Total Revenue	<u>6,589,060</u>	<u>6,725,122</u>
 <b>Expenditure by Program</b>		
Administrative Costs (1,2)	383,938	369,234
Arizona Vehicle Theft Task Force Grant	3,650,000	3,650,000
Vertical Prosecution Program	905,164	929,161
Public Awareness	245,490	226,671
Law Enforcement Grant Program	37,842	-
Professional Training & Special Grant Program	9,394	10,637
Emergency/Discretionary Grant Program		
Investigator Projects		
Reimbursable Programs		
Miscellaneous	-	-
Total Expenditures (3)	<u>5,231,828</u>	<u>5,185,703</u>
Transfer to Primary Government	(20,200)	(10,374)
Changes in Fund Balance	<u>1,337,032</u>	<u>1,529,045</u>
Beginning Fund Balance (4,5)	<u>4,891,247</u>	<u>6,228,279</u>
Ending Fund Balance (4,5)	<u>6,228,279</u>	<u>7,757,324</u>
 <b>Footnotes</b>		
1. Administrative Costs as a Percentage of Cash Collections	6.02%	5.55%
2. Administrative Costs as a Percentage of Total Expenditures	7.34%	7.12%
3. Actual Expenditures by Category per Audited Financial Statements		
Appropriated Current Operating Expenses		
Personal Services	317,907	326,099
Employee related expenses	119,700	117,959
Professional services	12,229	22,498
Travel-in-State	6,162	6,485
Travel-out-State	3,492	1,768
Aid to Organizations	4,596,573	4,592,678
Other Operating	87,602	99,097
Capital Outlay	35,782	13,482
Transfer to Primary Government	20,200	-
Total Expenditures	<u>5,199,647</u>	<u>5,180,066</u>
Non-appropriated Expenses		
Other Travel	315	-
Aid to Organizations	9,394	5,637
Miscellaneous	2,672	-
Transfer to Primary Government	-	10,374
Total Non-appropriated Expenditures	<u>12,381</u>	<u>16,011</u>
4&5. Fund balance includes accrued income as per the audited financial statements		
 <b>Total Expenditures</b>	 <u>5,212,028</u>	 <u>5,196,077</u>
 Cash invested with the State Treasurer as of June 30th	 \$2,915,687	 \$4,371,694
Report based on audited financial statements		

# 2019 AATA Board of Directors

The AATA Board of Directors includes twelve (12) members, appointed by the Governor and other organizations; representatives include: two police chiefs, two sheriffs, two county attorneys, two insurance industry representatives, two members of the general public, and the Directors of the Arizona Department of Public Safety and Arizona Motor Vehicle Division.

## Current AATA Board members include:



Board Chair  
Chief Daniel G. Sharp  
Oro Valley Police Department



Board Vice-Chair  
Matt Reed  
State Farm Insurance



Director Eric Jorgensen  
AZ. Motor Vehicle Division



Chief Michael Soelberg  
Gilbert Police Department



Allister Adel  
Maricopa County Attorney



Frank L. Milstead  
Arizona Department of Public Safety



Joe Brosius  
Public Member



Sheriff Paul Penzone  
Maricopa County Sheriff's Office



Sheriff Joseph A. Dedman, Jr.  
Apache County

Note: Current Board vacancies are 1 county attorney, 1 insurance industry representative, and 1 public member.



In  
Memory  
Of



1954

2019

Dean  
Chalmers  
Butler



In recognition of Mr. Butler's dedication and service  
to the Arizona Automobile Theft Authority  
as an AATA Board Member  
2001-2019



# AATA Staff

**James McGuffin**  
Executive Director

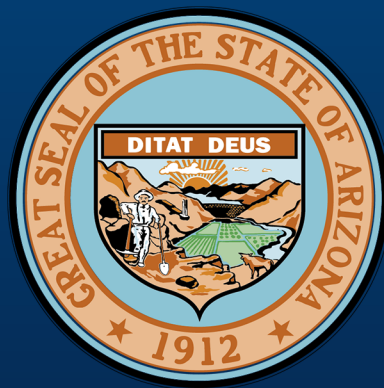
**Art Myer**  
Chief Financial Officer

**Ann Armstrong**  
Grant Administrator

**Frank Ceballos**  
Administrative Service Officer

**Amanda O'Halloran**  
Administrative Assistant III





An Equal Employment Opportunity Agency

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Arizona Automobile Theft Authority  
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The report was prepared and produced by AATA staff.

