



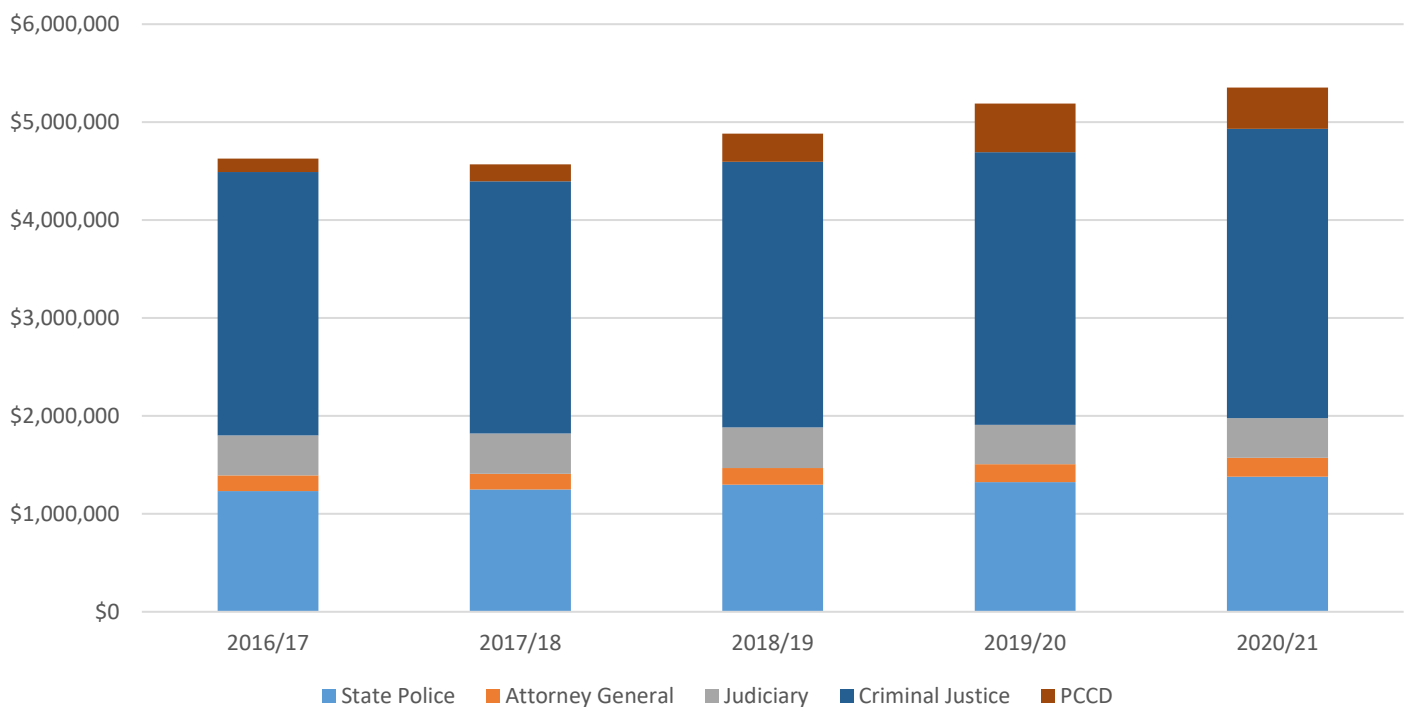
Pennsylvania State and Local Police

Law enforcement works to maintain public safety; ensure safe roads; and deliver intelligence services, including background checks.

Approximately one-third of Pennsylvania's 2,560 municipalities provide their own police services or procure them through a regional police department or other contract. Pennsylvania State Police provide law enforcement services throughout the commonwealth with the majority of calls for service generated in municipalities that do not provide, or contract for, police services. State police also provide other specialized services to facilitate criminal investigations and ensure public safety.

At over \$1 billion in annual expenditures, state police (highlighted in the figure below) represent 26 percent of the commonwealth's investment in the criminal justice system, which includes judiciary, corrections and rehabilitation, and victims' services.

Criminal Justice Spending by Agency



Source: PA Executive Budget, actual and available appropriations

Background

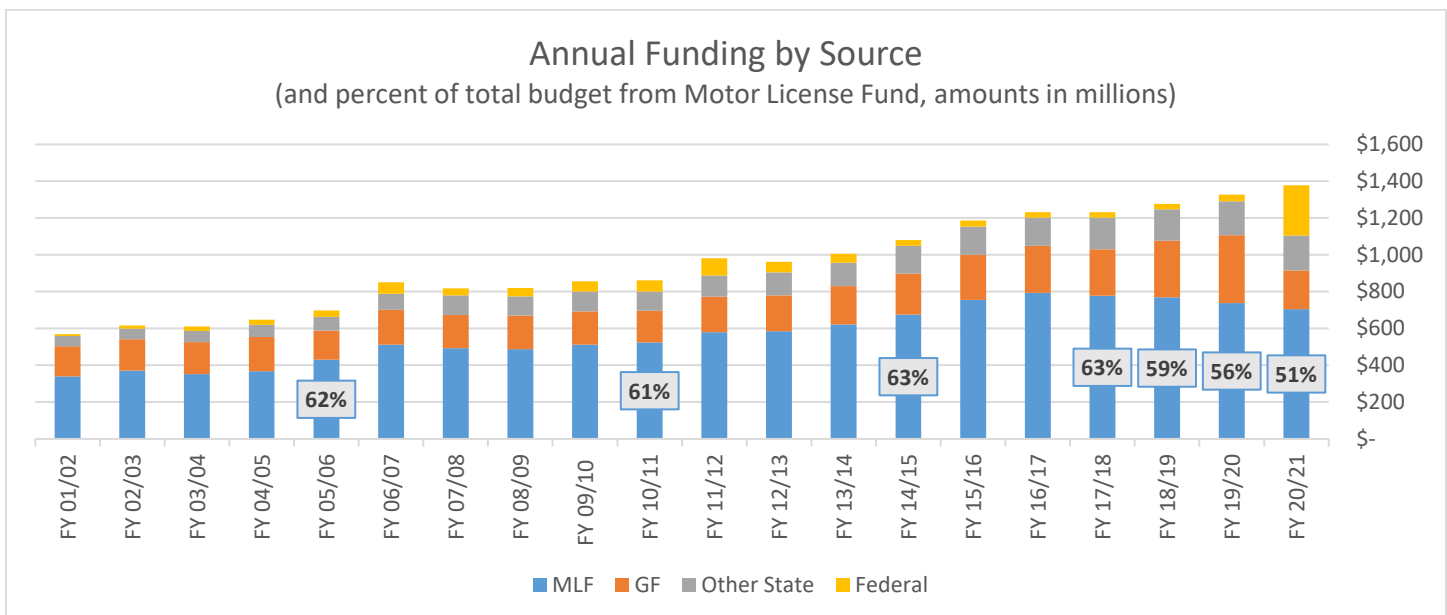
Established in 1905 as the Pennsylvania Motor Police and renamed the Pennsylvania State Police in 1943, the department has substantially grown in size and responsibility ([PSP History](#), 2016). Now led by a commissioner and three deputy commissioners of staff, operations, and administration, the agency operates 15 regional troops and a 16th - aptly designated as Troop T - is dedicated to the Pennsylvania Turnpike. The department ranks itself as the 10th largest police department in the nation¹.

The full scope of state police responsibilities is reflected in the different programs and appropriations in its budget, like traffic enforcement and investigation, forensic laboratories, and disaster relief.

Funding Sources

More than 80 percent of state police funding typically comes from two state sources: the Motor License Fund and the General Fund. Of this amount, the revenue from the Motor License Fund grew from 67 percent in 2000 to 76 percent by 2017 before dropping to 67 percent in 2019. The rest of state police's annual budget (typically 17 percent) comes from other state and federal funds. Federal portions largely support homeland security, drug enforcement, and investigation of computer crimes. The state police budget reached \$1 billion in 2013.

In FY 2020/21, the Pennsylvania State Police received \$225,970 from the federal government for COVID relief. These funds were used for General Government Operations.



Source: PA Executive Budget, actual and available appropriations

The largest of the other state accounts within state police are the State Stores Fund and State Gaming Fund, which provide for liquor and gaming enforcement, respectively. Another \$18.9 million comes from other restricted accounts each year and include forfeitures from criminal investigations, fees collected for state police services such as gun checks and criminal lab processing, and allocations from other agencies (U.S. Dept. of Justice, PA Attorney General, PA District Attorneys).

Most fines collected for traffic violations are deposited into the Motor License Fund or are returned to the municipality in which the ticket was written. However, a 1987 law (Act 64) established an annual transfer of these and other fees collected in excess of a baseline amount to the Judicial Computer System. After this transfer, the full amount of tickets written by state police on highways is deposited into the Motor License Fund. Half of the amount collected for traffic violations and DUI is deposited into that fund and half is returned to the municipality where the offense occurred.

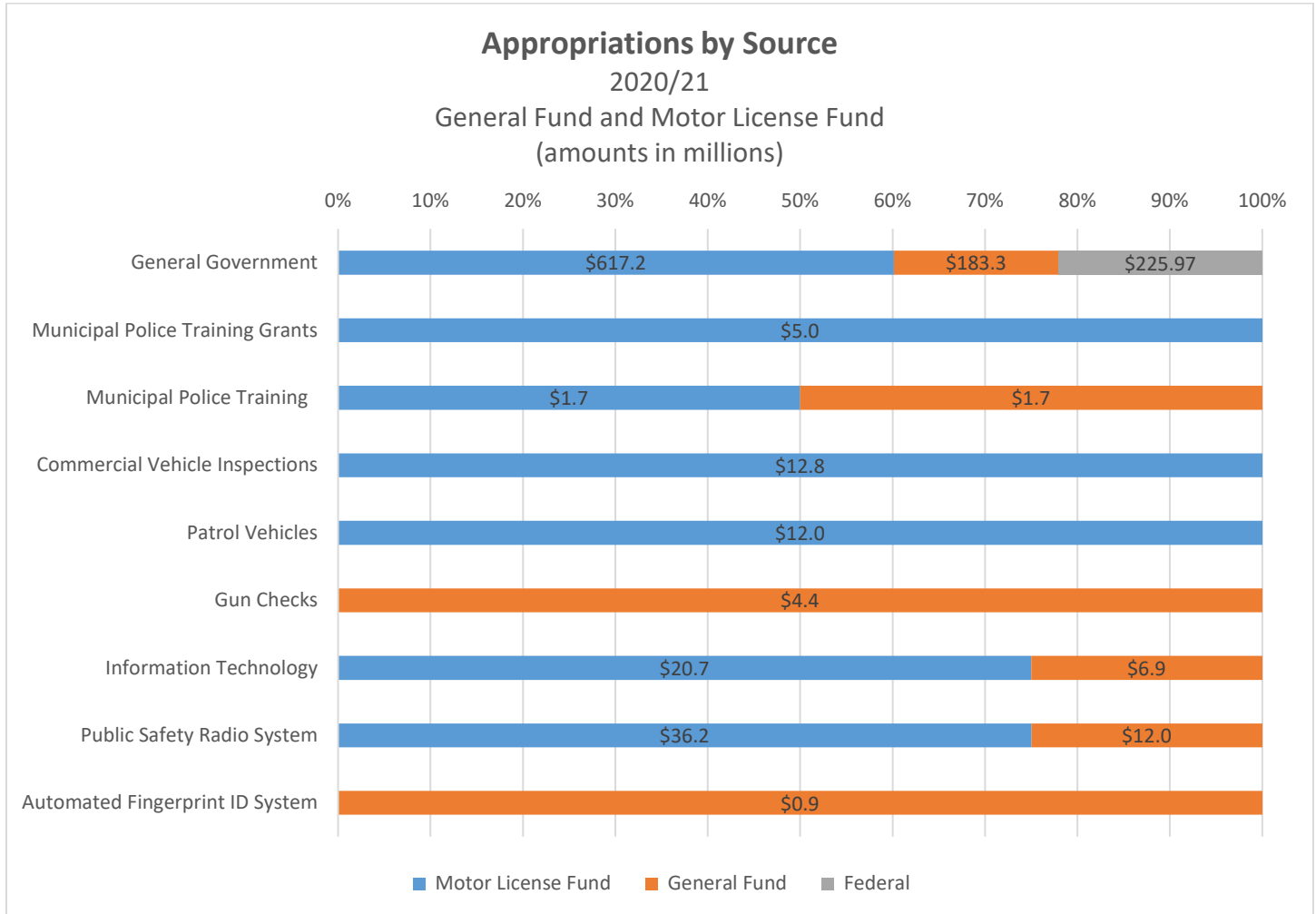
¹ <https://www.psp.pa.gov/Pages/psp-commissioner-biography.aspx>



Under statute (Act 124 of 2012), roughly \$1.7 million annually from the fines for traffic violations in large municipalities that do not provide their own law enforcement is set aside for training new state police cadets instead of being returned to the municipality.

Appropriations in the State Budget

The largest appropriation for the state police is general government operations (GGO), which consumes 74 percent of the department’s \$1.4 billion total budget². Shown in the chart below, the department’s GGO is funded by the Motor License Fund (60 percent), General Fund (18 percent), and in FY 2020/21, the federal government (22 percent) for COVID relief. This catch-all appropriation is spent largely on personnel (90 percent) and provides for criminal and traffic law enforcement, investigations, crime lab analysis, and implementing state and federal mandates.



Data Source: PA Executive Budget, actual and available appropriations

Highway Safety

The state police budget includes three appropriations that are fully funded by the Motor License Fund and pertain to highway safety and patrol activities: municipal police training grants, commercial vehicle inspections, and patrol vehicles. Training grants reimburse counties for the cost of highway safety training. A separate appropriation for municipal police training, funded equally by the Motor License and General funds, supports other aspects of the Municipal Police Officers’ Education and Training Program.

² For FY 2020/21, this includes Federal Covid Relief funds of nearly \$226 million



The appropriation for patrol vehicles provides for the replacement of patrol vehicles. Commercial vehicle inspections are conducted by state and local officers along state and interstate roadways to ensure safety and weight regulation compliance. Responsibility for these inspections, including personnel and resources, transferred to state police from the Department of Transportation in 2004.

Information Technology, Data Collection, and Registries

The second- and third-largest appropriations within the state police budget cover law enforcement information technology and the Public Safety Radio System. Similar to the appropriation for GGO, these accounts are funded at 25 percent from the General Fund and 75 percent from the Motor License Fund.

The appropriation for law enforcement information technology is almost entirely for operational expenses and supports IT-related programs, such as the incident information management system. The radio system, known as STARNet, is used by 22 state agencies, including PennDOT and the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, and provides communication across all 67 counties. State police took responsibility for STARNet in 2012 after it was previously administered by the Office of Administration.

State police are responsible for collecting data and maintaining several registries to ensure the public's safety in the commonwealth. The Commonwealth Law Enforcement Assistance Network, or CLEAN, holds a range of criminal record and investigative information, including criminal record checks, missing persons data, and homeland security.

Some data collection programs are supported by the law enforcement IT appropriation, while others receive dedicated funding from revenue on fees or General Funding appropriations. Pennsylvania's Instant Check System, or PICS, which is used to screen potential firearms owners, receives a General Fund appropriation for gun checks to supplement money from the Firearms Record Check Fund. The state's sex offender registry is funded by the DNA Detection Fund, which collects fees paid by registered sex offenders.

State police also maintains fingerprint records collected at arrest and from crime scenes using the Automated Fingerprint Identification System, known as AFIS, which is used by all state and municipal police departments. AFIS receives an annual appropriation that is paid for from the General Fund.

Liquor and Gaming Law Enforcement

The Bureau of Liquor Control Enforcement is funded through an annual appropriation from the State Stores Fund, which derives its revenue from liquor taxes. Besides enforcing the Pennsylvania Liquor Code and preventing related crimes, the bureau also enforces laws against gambling in licensed liquor establishments.

The Bureau of Gaming Enforcement is responsible for law enforcement in casinos and at racetracks. The Bureau of Gaming Enforcement receives an appropriation from the State Gaming Fund, which is funded by taxes on slot machine revenues.

Other Services

State police operates seven forensic laboratories accredited by the American Society of Crime Laboratories/Laboratory Accreditation Board. Some larger counties also operate forensic laboratories to support their, and surrounding counties', needs. State crime labs receive an appropriation from the Criminal Laboratory User Fee Fund, which collects fees for laboratory services according to a statutory fee schedule established by Act 140 of 1992.

How is Pennsylvania's Instant Check System funded?

1. The Firearms Records Check Fund

A \$3 surcharge on the purchase of a firearm to the buyer and a \$2 fee for the seller are deposited into the Firearm Records Check Fund. The total surcharge/fee of \$5 is unchanged since it was instituted in 1995.

2. General Fund appropriation for Gun Checks

When positive balances accrue in the records check fund, the General Fund appropriation may be reduced or zeroed out for one or more years.

3. General Fund appropriation for GGO

In most years, state police supplement these two sources with the funds from the GGO appropriation, typically for personnel costs associated with running PICS.



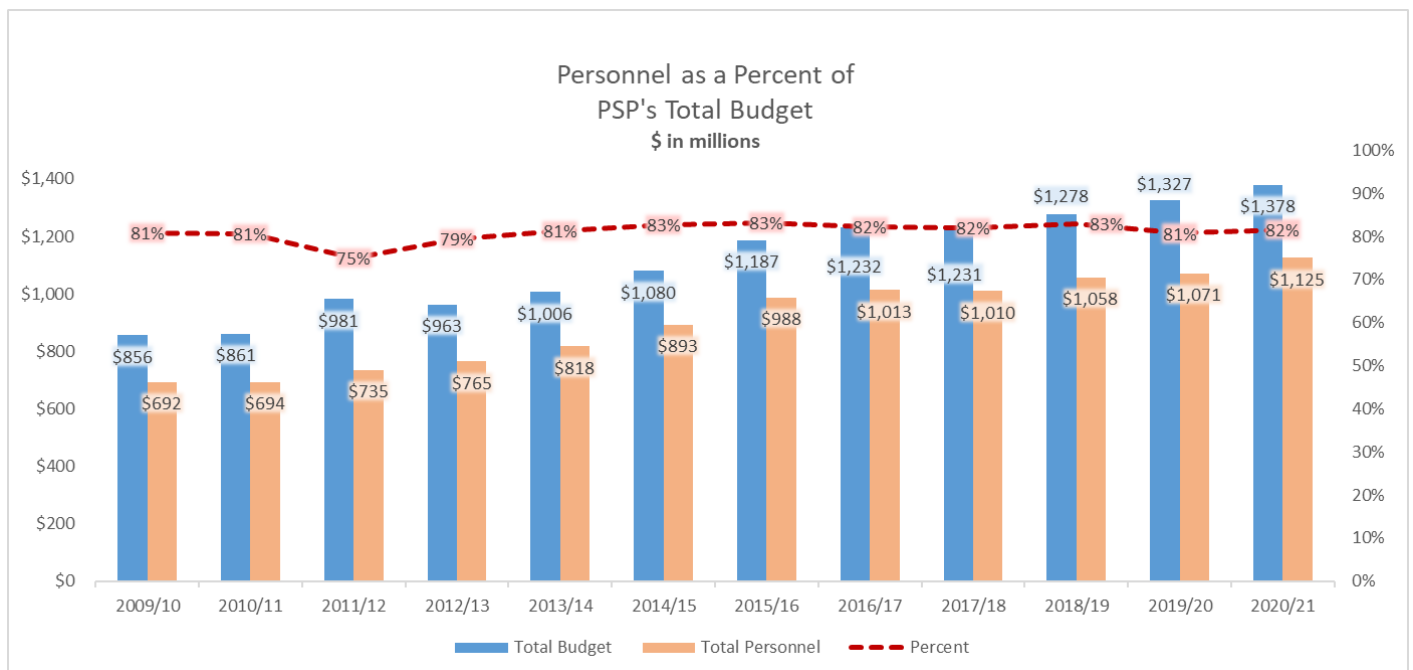
The General Fund appropriated forensic laboratory support from 2011 to 2015. Since 2015, this supplemental funding has come from the DNA Detection Fund, which collects fees paid by registered sex offenders. The fund's primary purpose is to maintain the state's sex offender registry, but it also supports forensic labs where DNA for the sex offender registry is tested along with other DNA samples.

State police respond throughout the commonwealth during emergency assistance situations, such as large-scale civil disorders, homeland security threats, and missions supporting the Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency. PEMA allocates federal homeland security grants to state police. State police also provide assistance at special events, such as planned civic gatherings and visiting dignitaries.

Cost Drivers

Personnel

As of 2020/21, personnel expenses represent 82 percent of the total state police budget and 90 percent of the largest appropriation (in terms of general government operations). The department estimates it needs a sworn complement of at least 4,500 to adequately provide the public safety services described above. In addition to the enlisted members (troopers), the department employs about 230 cadets and civilian personnel for a total complement of just over 6,600. Enlisted members are represented by the Pennsylvania State Troopers Association.



Data Sources: State Accounting System (SAP); PA Executive Budget, actual and available appropriations

Maintaining a trooper complement of at least 4,500 (what the commissioner calls the “public safety line”) requires the commonwealth to fund adequate cadet classes to keep up with retirements. This poses a financial challenge and a planning obstacle because the rate at which troopers retire is highly variable (State Police Testimony, House Appropriations Committee Budget Hearing, 2016).



Municipal Police Coverage

Where municipalities do not provide their own police force, or provide only partial police coverage, state police supplements. About half of the commonwealth's municipalities receive full-time police coverage from the state, and another 17 percent receive part-time coverage. The proportion of municipalities either fully or partially covered by state police has stayed constant at approximately 67 percent from [2010](#) to 2021.

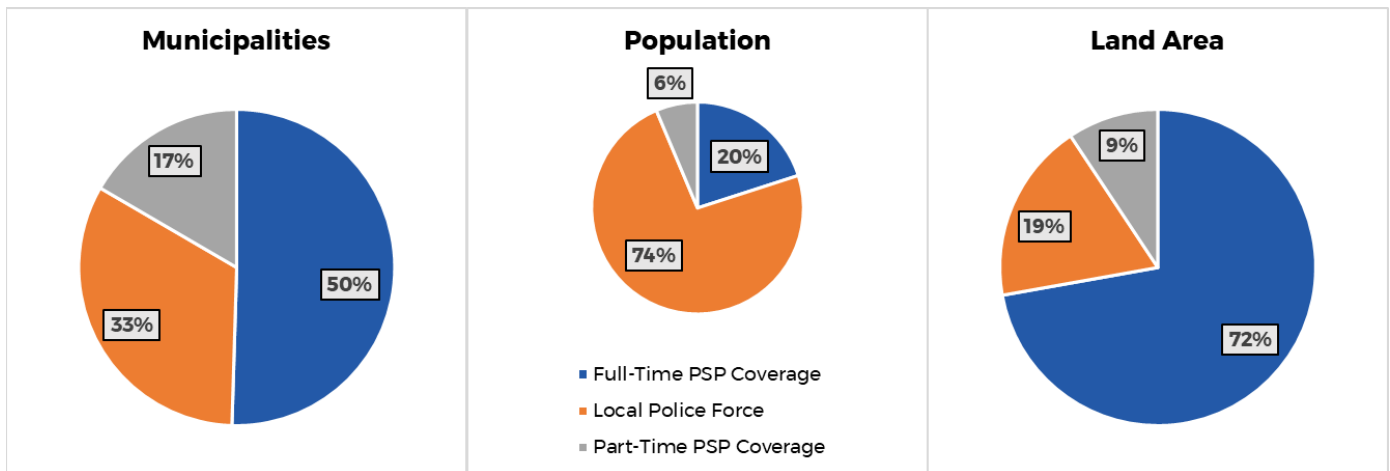
The exact amount of state police funding dedicated to providing these municipal police services is difficult to calculate. Each troop and the officers within it serve many functions, including municipal services, investigative services, traffic enforcement, and other special services. Even the Turnpike's Troop T may respond to calls for service if they have the nearest unit.

According to a Legislative Budget and Finance Committee [report](#), state police reported the cost of troopers serving municipalities without their own municipal or regional police department at \$540 million, or 56 percent of the total budget for that year. The report acknowledged that troopers do not record the portion of time spent in specific municipalities and this, therefore, is an inexact measure.

State police coverage of municipal law enforcement is frequently cited as a top concern for the department's budget. Legislation has been introduced over the years to require reimbursements from local municipalities for full- or part-time police coverage provided by state police. Recent examples are HB 959 and SB 741, both introduced in 2018/19. Neither bill passed out of committee (transportation and law and justice, respectively). Governor Wolf proposed a fee on all municipalities in his 2020/21 Executive Budget that, if implemented, would have raised an estimated \$136 million. For more information on this proposed fee, please see the [State Police Coverage of Municipalities report](#). A similar fee was again proposed in his 2021/22 Executive Budget. If implemented, it would have raised \$168 million.

In addition to law enforcement coverage, the state police budget supports municipalities with two appropriations for municipal police training, which gets half of its revenue from the General Fund and half from the Motor License Fund and provides for the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Program (Act 120 of 1974). The program received about \$8 million annually from 2000 to 2009, when funding fell to \$2.2 million. A second appropriation for the municipal police training grants was established in 2014, providing \$5 million annually from the Motor License Fund to reimburse municipalities for training under the program related to highway safety. The addition of this appropriation in 2014 restored total funding for the Municipal Police Officers' Education and Training Program to 2005 levels.

Proportion of State Police Coverage (2021)



Data Sources: Pennsylvania State Police; U.S. Census Bureau

