

Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office Improves Hiring, Saves Money with EyeDetect

"Not only is EyeDetect paying for itself in time and cost savings, it has also made our background screening process more effective and efficient."

-Weylin Proctor
Deputy, Bernalillo
County Sheriff's
Office

BACKGROUND

Established in 1879, Bernalillo County is New Mexico's most populous county with more than 750,000 residents. The county employs about 2,450 people of which nearly 300 are sworn officers.

CHALLENGE

All law enforcement applicants must successfully pass through a series of pre-employment vetting steps which includes providing pre-employment and integrity questionnaires, personal history, written exams, physical agility test, background investigation, oral interview, psychological and medical examinations, and a polygraph.

For background investigations, Sheriff's Office personnel are used. Costs range between \$540 and \$1500, depending on whether a deputy or part-time investigator conducts the investigation. Polygraph exams are conducted by an examiner whose primary assignment is with a federal task force and are administered on weekends or evenings to meet timeframes.



EYEDTECT IMPLEMENTED

In early 2021, EyeDetect was purchased with the expectation of saving man-hours while improving the hiring and background investigation process, and ultimately finding better applicants. All applicants were tested with EyeDetect first. If a person passed the test, they proceeded to the background investigation. If a person failed the EyeDetect test, they were polygraphed. If they passed the polygraph, they proceeded to the background investigation. If they failed the polygraph, they were disqualified from the process.

RESULTS

From July to December, 46 people applied to enter the academy. A total of 11 applicants were disqualified by EyeDetect/polygraph prior to undergoing further investigation, tests and exams mentioned earlier. The average cost of conducting a background investigation was \$1,061. As a result, the department saved over \$11,600 just for that step. After paying for examiners' time and for EyeDetect tests, there was a net savings of about \$5,400.

Fewer background investigations required to vet applicants resulted in fewer man-hours required by key personnel to fill an academy class and lower costs. In addition, investigators focused on their core law enforcement responsibilities.

Examiners also made decisions with improved information gained using EyeDetect. Anecdotal evidence suggests EyeDetect test results helped obtain admissions (confessions) from applicants hiding inappropriate behavior. This helped examiners focus on potential problem areas.

Improved information also saved time and cost for the polygraph portion of this process. Prior to using EyeDetect, polygraph exams were used to make deception determinations on applicants. With EyeDetect, there was a decreased need and frequency for conducting multiple tests on applicants. This decreased the average time to perform a polygraph, which in turn reduces overall costs.

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