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

"Not only is EyeDetect paying for itself in time and cost savings, but 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 — with more than 750,000 residents — is New Mexico's most populous county. 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 $1,500, depending on whether a deputy or part-time investigator conducts the investigation. Polygraph exams are administered on weekends or evenings to meet timeframes and conducted by an examiner. This examiner's primary assignment is with a federal task force.

EYEDETECT 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 2021, 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 previously mentioned. The average cost of conducting a background investigation was $1,061. As a result, the department saved over $11,600 for that step. After paying for examiners' time and for EyeDetect tests, there was a net savings of about $5,400.

Fewer staff hours were spent by key personnel to fill an academy class because less background investigations to vet applicants were required. This reduced costs as well. 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 saved time and reduced the cost for the polygraph portion of the 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 reduced costs.

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