

South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy

Guidelines for Psychological Evaluation and Reimbursement

July 25, 2017

The South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy, under the direction of the Law Enforcement Training Council, has received legislative funding to implement psychological evaluations and screenings for all Basic Law Enforcement Class 1 candidates beginning January 1, 2018. The hiring agency sponsoring a candidate will be responsible for having the evaluation administered during the pre-employment phase of the hiring process. The Academy will reimburse the agency up to a maximum of \$300.00 for each valid evaluation. The Academy will only pay for one evaluation to be administered per individual per year. The Academy will not pay for evaluations for tenured Class 1 certified employees. **All candidates registering for Class 1 certification training after January 1, 2018 must have a valid psychological evaluation in order to register if the hire date on their PCS is after October 1, 2017. The academy will begin funding evaluations October 1, 2017. Agencies submitting a PCS of hire form after October 1, 2017 must use the new PCS form which will have an attestation section for Psychological Evaluation Information.**

The South Carolina Training Council and the Academy hopes that this initiative will be used by all Chiefs, Sheriffs and Directors of law enforcement agencies within the State as another tool during the selection and evaluation process of new law enforcement candidates.

Listed below are the minimum guidelines and procedures to be used with this process:

Psychological Evaluation Guidelines: Minimum Criteria for ensuring standard practice is maintained with acknowledgement to the 2014 IACP "Pre-employment Psychological Evaluation Guidelines."

Examiner Qualifications:

- South Carolina licensed doctoral level Psychologist or other licensed mental health professional qualified to administer and interpret clinical psychological assessments of public safety or law enforcement personnel.
- Professionally competent in clinical assessment as well as the assessment of normal personality characteristics, skills, and abilities relevant to personnel selection.
- Trained and experienced in the provision of pre-employment psychological evaluation for public safety / law enforcement positions, and maintains continuing education and professional training.
- Familiar with the research literature available on psychological evaluation for public safety / law enforcement positions.
- Familiar with pertinent employment law impacting the conduct of pre-employment psychological evaluations (i.e. ADA, EEOC, GINA, etc.).

- Familiar with the minimum responsibilities, duties, working conditions and other psychologically relevant job requirements for public safety / law enforcement based along with specific requirements for the position of hire.
- Must adhere to profession's ethical principals and standards of practice.

Evaluation Process:

- The psychological evaluation should include a human reliability interview with the candidate for a minimum of 30 minutes to provide relevant interpersonal and mental status information and to confirm and/or clarify psychological assessment scores, personal history, and other relevant information.
- The psychological evaluation should include a psychological assessment related to mental health stability and suitability factors. This assessment should have documented reliability, validity and other empirical evidence supporting their use in pre-employment evaluation of public safety / law enforcement applicants.
- The testing instrument should be a qualified test battery relevant to the client population which can be utilized to evaluate the suitability of the candidate and provide for relevant discussion during the interview process of the evaluation.
- Detailed personal history to include family background, school, previous work, legal issues, finances, interpersonal relationship or substance use should be integrated into the test data in a standardized manner.
- Methods used to detect deception should be incorporated to validate the personal integrity of the candidate.

Evaluation Content:

- The human reliability interview should cover developmental milestones, academic history, work history, psychological and substance use history, interpersonal relationships, legal history, coping skills, and management of financial responsibilities.
- The psychological evaluation should specifically address the following individual factors related to public safety / law enforcement employment:
 - Freedom from any emotional or mental condition that might adversely affect the performance of law enforcement duties and responsibilities.
 - Stress resilience and emotional stability to withstand the psychological demands in the position of a law enforcement officer.
 - Interpersonal effectiveness
 - Self-control /impulse control
 - Decision-making ability
 - Respect for rules and authority
 - Judgement
 - Threat immunity
 - Reasonable courage
 - Self-awareness

- Self-confidence
- Empathy and social awareness
- Integrity
- Adaptability
- Lack of personal bias
- Motivation and drive for public safety
- Dependability and reliability
- Initiative
- Ability to project appropriate assertiveness and authority
- Ability to exert influence
- Ability to deal with supervision and follow policy

Evaluation Report:

- The final psychological report should contain clear determination of the candidate's suitability and stability for public safety employment. The findings should be based on an integration of the test battery results, the psychological interview, background information and any agency specific requirements relevant to the pre-employment assessment. Clinical diagnosis or psychiatric labeling should be avoided unless pertinent information is discovered. In all cases. The findings should focus on the candidate's ability to safely and effectively perform the essential job duties of public safety in law enforcement.

Records:

- Tests instruments, protocols, summary and final written reports are considered medical records and should be securely maintained in accordance with Federal, State and professional standards.
- Any final reports or information received by an agency through this process should be maintained by the agency in the individual's personnel file in accordance with the local records retention policy.

Reimbursement Process:

- The Academy will reimburse the municipality, county or State entity that has paid for a law enforcement candidate's pre-hire psychological evaluation upon proper request. The maximum amount for reimbursement will be \$300.00.
- In order to receive a reimbursement the agency or governmental entity must complete a Psychological Reimbursement Form (located on the SCCJA Web site), attach the examiner's bill and mail to:
 - South Carolina Criminal Justice Academy
 - 5400 Broad River Road
 - Columbia, S.C. 29212
 - Attn: Finance Section

- If the agency has the capability these documents can be scanned and sent as attachments to the following email address: Finance@sccja.sc.gov
- All reimbursements will be processed within 30 days.