



Introduction

The PCBS was developed to improve the background self-reports which police departments presently use. Almost every police department uses a background self-report form of some type to gather information from candidates during the personnel selection process. These data collection forms are developed locally and provide some useful information to the hiring departments. Although these are tools for data collection, they are neither standardized nor quantified. There is no way to measure their reliability or validity, and normative data is virtually impossible to gather, either locally or across jurisdictions. The goal of the Police Candidate Background Self-Report (PCBS) is to make the collection of background data more systematic and quantitative. Quantitative information allows for empirical studies of the reliability and validity of the PCBS and the different types of background information it evaluates. These studies help make the background self-report a more useful tool for personnel selection.

Survey of Police Jurisdictions

In preparation for development of the PCBS, sample background self-report forms were gathered from approximately 75 jurisdictions across the country, including small, medium, and large municipal police departments, as well as state police departments. These forms ranged in length from 3 pages to 40 pages. The topics covered typically included at least all of the following: (a) personal identification information (e.g., name, address, height, weight, age, hair and eye color, social security number); (b) educational history; (c) employment history, including military history; (d) criminal history; (e) driving history, including tickets; and (f) finances.

Based on compiling and organizing the questions asked in the various background self-report forms, the 16 PCBS subject areas were identified.

Visit policecbs.info/results/Topics_Covered.pdf for a summary of the subject areas.