

Institute for Drug Abuse (NIDA), exist to ensure that accurate procedures are followed. More than 50 drug-testing laboratories have been certified by NIDA. Second, positive drug tests should always be verified by a second test to ensure reliability.

What does a well-conducted drug-testing program look like?¹³⁷ Samples are first submitted to screening tests, which are relatively inexpensive (\$30–\$40 per applicant) but yield many false positives (test indicates drug use when none occurred) due to the cross-reactions described above. Confirmatory tests are then used, which are extremely accurate but more expensive. Error rates for confirmatory tests with reputable labs are very low. To avoid false positives, most organizations have nonzero cutoff levels for most drugs. Thus, if a mistake does occur, it is much more likely to be a false negative (testing negative when in fact drug use did occur) than a false positive. Thus, some applicants who occasionally use drugs may pass a test, but it is very rare for an individual who has never used drugs to fail the test—assuming the two-step process described above is followed. Exhibit 9.15 outlines the steps involved in a well-designed drug-testing program. In this example:

- Applicants are advised in advance of testing.
- All applicants are screened by urine testing.
- Prescreening is done in-house; positives are referred to an independent lab.

EXHIBIT 9.15 Example of an Organizational Drug-Testing Program

