

## **Revised SCOPE STATEMENT**

### **Illegal Immigrants: Reviewing Studies That Have Assessed Their Economic Impact**

In recent years, officials in many states have expressed a great deal of concern about the federal government's failure to adequately enforce the country's immigration policies. Research groups estimate that currently there are between eight million and 20 million illegal immigrants in the United States. The most common estimates tend to be about 12 million.

Studies have shown that illegal immigrants can be costly to the taxpayers in three main areas: education, health care, and law enforcement. For example, the federal No Child Left Behind Act mandates that schools improve the performance of low-income students and those who aren't fluent in English. Increasing numbers of poor, non-English speaking immigrant students adds significantly to the cost of education. Also, many illegal immigrants don't have health insurance, and so they often rely on hospital emergency rooms for basic medical care, which is more costly and often has to be written off by the hospitals because of the recipient's inability to pay.

A number of studies have been conducted of the impact of illegal immigration nationally and in some other states. Legislators have expressed an interest in knowing what these studies generally have shown about the costs of services provided to the illegal immigrants as well as the amount of tax revenue they likely generate. This information can help legislators better understand the likely economic impact on Kansas as well as the impact of legislation they may be considering.

A performance audit of this topic would answer the following questions.

- 1. What have studies shown about the cost of benefits and services provided to illegal immigrants?** To answer this question we would identify reliable studies of this topic that have been conducted in recent years. In addition, we would contact officials from the Urban Institute, the Pew Center for Hispanic Studies, the Center for Immigration Studies, the Federal Reserve System, and others to make sure we haven't overlooked any recent studies that are considered important and credible. We would review and summarize the results of those studies to identify what they have shown about the costs associated with illegal immigration for all levels of government. In addition, in the time available, we would contact various State agencies and other organizations such as the Kansas Medical Society, the Kansas Hospital Association, the Kansas Peace Officers Association, and the Kansas Sheriffs Association to learn about and gather any information they may have assembled about costs of illegal immigrants that are specific to Kansas.
- 2. What have studies shown about the revenues or other benefits illegal immigrants provide to offset the cost of services they receive?** To answer this question, we would use the same sources that are used for question one, and determine what they show about the tax revenues or other benefits illegal immigrants provide.

3. **What have studies shown about the impact of illegal immigration on labor costs and the job markets?** To answer this question, we would review and summarize the results of recently conducted studies that have estimated the impact of illegal immigration on labor costs and the job market. In addition, we would contact officials from the Department of Labor, labor union representatives, employer representatives, or others to determine what studies they may have conducted about the impact of illegal immigrants on labor costs and the job market that may be specific to Kansas.

**Estimated time to complete:** 4-6 weeks