

OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

In September 1996, Congress passed and the President signed into law the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (IIRIRA). Among other provisions, this law required that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), in conjunction with the Social Security Administration (SSA), test a series of pilot programs to electronically verify the employment authorization of newly hired employees. Section 405 of IIRIRA further required that the Attorney General submit reports on the pilot programs to the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. These reports were mandated to:

- Assess the degree of fraudulent attestation of U.S. citizenship
- Include recommendations on whether the pilot programs should be continued or modified
- Assess the benefits of the pilot programs to employers and the degree to which they assist in the enforcement of employer sanctions

The Administration and nongovernment groups viewed an extensive evaluation as an essential part of the implementation of the employment verification pilots, addressing the mandate in Section 405 of IIRIRA as well as additional issues. This report presents the results of the evaluation of the Basic Pilot program, the first of the three pilot programs mandated by IIRIRA.

Section One presents the background of the employment authorization verification pilot programs.

- Chapter I is a history of employer sanctions and employment verification in the United States, leading up to the implementation of the Basic Pilot program.
- Chapter II describes the Basic Pilot program and identifies the priority issues for the evaluation.
- Chapter III provides an overview of the research methodology used in the evaluation.
- Chapter IV discusses the environment in which the Basic Pilot program was implemented, and how pilot States, communities, employers, and employees compare to their counterparts not participating in the program.

Section Two presents the findings of the Basic Pilot program evaluation, as they relate to the key evaluation questions discussed in Section One.

- Chapter V presents the results of employment verifications from the Basic Pilot Employment Verification System.
- Chapter VI discusses employer participation in the Basic Pilot and their perceptions of it.

- Chapter VII presents the findings on employer and employee compliance with Basic Pilot procedures.
- Chapter VIII examines the impact of the Basic Pilot on discrimination.
- Chapter IX discusses the implications of the Basic Pilot for privacy and fair information practices.
- Chapter X presents the financial and non-financial costs and benefits of the Basic Pilot.

Section Three addresses broader issues relating to the implications of the Basic Pilot program for the future of automated employment verification in the United States.

- Chapter XI addresses the major programmatic goals of the Basic Pilot program – specifically, whether the program fulfills its immediate goal of reducing employment among individuals who are not work-authorized and whether it is effective in deterring undocumented immigration.
- Chapter XII considers the costs and benefits of four alternatives for expanding the Basic Pilot program.
- Chapter XIII summarizes the findings of this report and makes several recommendations for future efforts at automating employment verification.

The report concludes with a bibliography of the literature cited, a glossary of terms, and appendices discussing technical issues in more detail. The appendices also include copies of the survey questionnaires used in this study.