

SOWK 7366- Hispanics in the US: Policy and Programs



Legislative Issue Brief - Annotated Outline

This document provides an outline of, and direction for, the Legislative Issue Brief.

Title of the Policy Brief

The title aims to catch the attention of the reader and compel him/her to read on and so needs to be **descriptive, punchy and relevant**.

Executive Summary

The Executive Summary is meant to highlight the main points of the brief and compel the reader to read more. It is especially important for an audience that is short of time to clearly see the relevance and importance of the brief in reading the summary. As such, a 1 to 2 paragraph executive summary commonly includes:

- A **description of the problem** addressed;
- A statement on **why the current approach/policy option needs to be changed**;
- Your **recommendations for action**.

Context and Importance of the Problem

The purpose of this section is to provide context to better understand the current situation of the issue and to convince the target audience that a urgent problem exists which requires them to take action. Include in this section the following information:

- A clear **statement of the problem or issue** in focus. Define the scope of the issue.
- A short **overview of the root causes of the problem and its current state of affair**
- A clear statement of the **policy implications of the problem** which clearly establishes the current importance and policy relevance of the issue.

While working on this section consider the following questions:

- Has the policy achieved its intended goal
- What has been some of intended and unintended consequences of the policy?

Critique of Policy Option(s)

The purpose of this section is to detail shortcomings of the current approach or options being implemented and therefore, illustrate both the need for change and focus of where change needs to occur. In doing so, the critique of policy options usually includes the following:

- A short **overview of the policy option(s)** in focus
- An argument illustrating their limitations. Explain the **why and how the current or proposed approach is failing**.

Policy Recommendations

The purpose of this section is to provide a detailed and convincing proposal of how the failings of the current policy approach need to change. As such this is achieved by including;

- A breakdown of the **specific practical steps or measures** that need to be implemented including a description of the recommendation, the rationale behind it, proposals for implementation and evaluation.
- Includes a **closing paragraph** re-emphasising the importance of action.

Appendices

Although the brief is a short and targeted document, authors sometimes decide that their argument needs further support and so include an appendix. **Appendices should be included only when absolutely necessary**.

Reference page

Make sure that all sources used in the Policy Brief either to strengthen your argument and to provide as additional resources are listed using APA style.