

Background for the series

Post-Dispatch reporter Karen Branch-Brioso was one of 17 Border Justice fellows named last fall by the University of Southern California's Annenberg Institute for Justice and Journalism. The institute sponsored an eight-day conference in November in towns along both sides of the U.S.-Mexican border. The *Post-Dispatch* assumed the balance of the costs for this report, which looks at the impact of stepped-up border security on immigrants in the St. Louis area.

This series in one instance uses a pseudonym and in others uses real names but omits surnames to protect the identities of immigrants who are in the United States illegally. These were the only conditions under which these immigrants would be interviewed. Actual names are used for immigrants here legally, and for family members in Mexico.