



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



EL SALVADOR COUNTRY PROFILE

OVERVIEW

El Salvador has made significant democratic advances, including successive free and fair elections, accompanied by social and economic progress. Despite these gains, insecurity from gang-related violence and lack of economic opportunity drive thousands of Salvadorans to attempt to illegally immigrate to the United States.

El Salvador is taking measures to address the problem through a country plan to advance prosperity, security, and governance to reduce illegal immigration, which aligns with the U.S. Government's foreign policy objectives for El Salvador.

OUR WORK

USAID addresses the drivers of illegal immigration by working with the government and people of El Salvador for a country that is more prosperous, self-reliant and safe so Salvadorans believe they can thrive at home. Security activities help create safe communities, reduce crime and violence, and strengthen law enforcement so that criminals are brought to justice. Through education, job training, and partnerships with business, USAID increases employment opportunities, particularly for youth, who, without alternatives, would be more likely to attempt to illegally immigrate. USAID improves government transparency and accountability and promotes citizen oversight of public resources to reduce corruption. Our work helps Salvadorans envision a brighter future in El Salvador.

CITIZEN SECURITY AND ACCESS TO JUSTICE

USAID targets high crime cities, where people are more likely to attempt to illegally immigrate, with programs that integrate law enforcement with community-level crime and violence prevention. Activities help create vibrant, prosperous neighborhoods by reclaiming and revitalizing public spaces, improving municipal services, increasing educational and job opportunities, and reintegrating returned migrants to prevent repeat migration attempts. In addition, USAID strengthens the justice system to more fairly and effectively prosecute and convict

criminals. Together, these activities are helping to reduce crime and violence, a major cause of illegal immigration. Between 2015 and 2018, El Salvador homicides dropped an average of 53 percent in the 50 municipalities. Several municipalities with active USAID programs saw even higher declines of up to 66 percent.

ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

Along with violence, lack of economic opportunities and a path to long-term prosperity in El Salvador fuels illegal immigration. USAID is helping Salvadoran small businesses to grow and create new jobs, so that people remain. Higher education and job training programs align workforce skills with productive sector needs and promote innovative business expansion. These activities target people that are most likely to attempt to illegally immigrate, giving them a career path and placing them in jobs. Support for quality education at the primary and secondary level also prepares youth for future employment. Alternative education programs help school drop-outs complete their schooling. Boosting trade is another way to increase incomes and jobs. USAID works with Salvadoran authorities to streamline and improve border management and customs procedures. Over the last five years, small businesses assisted by USAID increased sales by \$149 million and created over 30,800 new jobs. In addition, El Salvador was named a “Top 10 improver” in the World Bank’s annual Doing Business ranking in 2018, in part due to improvements in areas such as construction permitting, paying taxes and trading across borders.

DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE

USAID government ethics and anti-corruption programs promote greater transparency, accountability and more responsive governance. Support for the Freedom of Information Law has resulted in unprecedented access to official documents, which has triggered investigations and prosecution for illicit enrichment by public officials, including former presidents. USAID also works with municipal governments to increase accountability and transparency and improve basic services to encourage people to remain in their community. Through improved tax collection and more transparent budgeting, the Salvadoran government has increased revenues as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 16 percent (\$657 million) from 2015 to 2018.



USAID supports community policing to improve police and community relations, particularly with youth, to reduce crime and violence, a major driver of illegal immigration

OSCAR LEIVA FOR USAID



Job training and placement provides economic opportunities for youth and promotes innovation and economic growth.

USAID



Revitalizing public spaces and education opportunities provide alternatives for youth in high crime communities

OSCAR LEIVA FOR USAID

For more information on USAID El Salvador and USAID Central America Regional Programs call: (503) 2501-3411 / 3422 or visit www.usaid.gov/el-salvador