

# USCRI IN CENTRAL AMERICA

For over 100 years, USCRI has been protecting the rights and addressing the needs of displaced persons worldwide, providing tools and opportunities for self-sufficiency to refugees and immigrants through its nationwide network and field office in Central America. As a direct response to the increasing number of Central American children seeking refuge, USCRI expanded its services to provide on-the-ground assistance to repatriated children. For over a decade, we have served unaccompanied immigrant children through our national *pro-bono* legal network and our Post Release Services program, which ensures vulnerable children are safe, and have linkages to education, legal and health providers.

## On the ground in Central America

USCRI opened its doors in San Salvador, El Salvador in 2014. Since then, we have coordinated with the Salvadoran government and civil society organizations to provide services in the Usulután province, San Salvador and Chalatenango, which is known for high rates of people migrating to other countries.

### Reintegration

In the neighborhoods across El Salvador, USCRI has opened doors for over 200 repatriated Central American youth by providing them with essential social and legal services to restore their shattered lives.

### Alternatives for Youth program

USCRI's *Alternatives for Youth* program, in collaboration with the Salvadoran Institute for Professional Training (INSAFORP) and the Salvadoran Institute for the Integral Development of Children and Adolescents (ISNA), is a new initiative launched in May 2016. The program aims to provide workforce development training to repatriated Salvadoran youth seeking to improve their economic conditions and achieve self-sufficiency. USCRI's El Salvador office staff are all nationals which gives them an in-depth cultural understanding of the children and youth they serve. They are dedicated to improving the lives of youth and their communities by helping them to reintegrate and by providing comprehensive social and employment services.



### Collaborations with Central American Governments and Civil Society

USCRI has signed Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with the Governments of El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras. The MOUs outline the continued collaboration between USCRI and these countries in providing access to pro-bono legal services for unaccompanied children in the U.S., providing in-country technical assistance to the reception and processing of returned youth, and training consulate officials on U.S. immigration law and refugee matters.

USCRI also advocates for the needs of unaccompanied children with the U.S. Congress, the President of the United States and his Administration, and other key stakeholders. Internationally we advocate for protection of Central Americans as a member of El Salvador-based National Council for Migrant Persons (CONMIGRANTES) and as part of the Regional Working Group for the Brazil Plan of Action, which is made up of more than 30 organizations.