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A New Path: Deportation to Guatemala

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This document is a work in progress and part of the larger publication, [*A New Path: A Guide to the Challenges and Opportunities After Deportation*](#), from the Education Justice Project at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. We are working on updating this guide for 2026 but recognize how urgently its content is needed. We believe there is information here that can literally save lives, so please share this document widely. Please also share your feedback with us, including any omissions or errors. We can add updates before the next edition. Email us at reentry@educationjustice.net.

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Life After Deportation: Guatemala

Deportation is a time of unknowns. You may be worried about where you'll go after deportation, if there will be people to help you. Know that you are not alone. Other people have gone through this before. This chapter is based on our research and their experiences. It will give you important information on deportation to Guatemala.

- ★ This section focuses on information that is unique to Guatemala. For more general information on life after deportation, see the [Mexico chapters](#). If you are currently incarcerated and face deportation upon release, you may also want to request a copy of our prison reentry guide, *Mapping Your Future: A Guide to Successful Reentry* or access it online, here: tinyurl.com/MYFNA. Its content focuses on return to communities in the US but has some content that can be useful for deported people, especially those who have experienced long periods of incarceration before returning to their countries of origin.
- ★ Representatives of the Guatemalan consulate (MINEX) often visit Guatemalans who are detained. If you meet with them, they can help you get travel documents. If you have special needs, they can arrange for assistance when you arrive in Guatemala. In special circumstances they may be able to offer travel assistance for your return to Guatemala. For information on all the consular services available to Guatemalans living abroad, see this guide produced by Guatemala's Ministry of Foreign Relations: tinyurl.com/GT-Consular-svc.
- ★ For information on creating a family plan and other things you can do to prepare while you're living in the US, see the "[Plan for Possible Deportation](#)" chapter.

Arriving in Guatemala

In this section, you can find information on:

- Location of Arrival
- Reception: What to Expect
- Support Services upon Arrival
- Emergency Housing
- Helpful Organizations and Agencies

Location of Arrival

Deportation flights land in Guatemala City at the military airport, La Aurora Air Force Base. Upon landing, all returning citizens will go through a reception process at the Returned Migrant Reception Center (Centro de Recepción de Personas Migrantes Retornadas). The authority that oversees the reception process is called the Council of Attention and Protection (Consejo de Atención y Protección or CAP). CAP is made up of 12 different public agencies, and you may interact with government officials from different ones, like the Guatemalan Migration Institute (Instituto Guatemalteco de Migración) or the Public Health and Social Assistance Ministry (Ministero de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social or MSPAS).

Arrival times are hard to predict. Sometimes flights land late at night or on weekends, and multiple flights may land at once. Although the Guatemalan government shares the arrival

times of deportation flights with the general public, they do not say who is on board.

Reception: What to Expect

The Reception Center process helps people in the following order:

- Those with urgent medical needs or special needs
- Those with detention orders
- Unaccompanied minors
- Family units
- Adult women
- Adult men

Detention orders: By the time your plane lands, the Guatemalan National Police will already have received and verified a list of everyone on your plane with detention orders or “orden de captura” in Spanish. The people on that list may be arrested and detained upon arrival.

The reception process can take a long time—especially if multiple flights have landed. Unfortunately, you may not be allowed to use the restroom until after your registration is complete, and there is little privacy during the identification and registration process.

After your plane arrives, CAP officials will tell you (as a group) about the resources available to you. This may be confusing, especially after a long and potentially traumatic journey, so try to be prepared.

“Just be patient and stay calm, and if you can, try to buddy up with someone during the whole process, while you’re detained and during your transport, and stick together with that person until you get to your next destination.” - Maria

If you were traveling with personal possessions, they should be returned to you early in the reception process. If you need **medical help**, it should be provided shortly after you arrive. But since there will be only one doctor working, getting medical help might be a challenge. You will be transported to a local hospital if it’s an emergency.

CAP workers will offer shelter to **unaccompanied minors** and try to help them reunite with their families. The Secretaria de Bienestar Social should offer **families traveling together** additional assistance.

Trained workers will screen for **victims of sexual violence, exploitation, and human trafficking**. If this includes you, they will refer you to the office of the Secretary Against Sexual Violence, Exploitation, and Human Trafficking (Secretaria Contra la Violencia Sexual, Explotación y Trata de Personas, SVET). Their services include protection services including possible shelter as well as the option to make a complaint or participate in the penal process.

For more information see tinyurl.com/SVETProtocol.

Once you are processed, you will be given a ticket that documents your admission into the country. You can bring this ticket to the National Registry (Registro Nacional, or RENAP) kiosk and request your *Documento Personal de Identificación* (DPI, learn more on p. 7). This is free. If you need to change your department of residence (which is like a “home state” in the US), you will have to pay for a new DPI. You can get your RENAP on another day if you prefer, but a fee, and possibly a longer process may be required.

- ★ If your identity cannot be confirmed during the regular registration process, you will be sent to the RENAP kiosk in the reception center to confirm your identity.

After the reception process is finally complete, you will be provided with a meal if food is still available. (When multiple flights land around the same time, food sometimes runs out.)

When you leave the airport, there should be a bus to take you to bus terminals or to a shelter. If you need a bus and do not see it, ask at the RENAP kiosk.

Staying Safe When You Travel. Theft and armed robbery are common in Guatemala City. Zones 3, 18, and 19 are generally considered the most dangerous in Guatemala City and are best to avoid if possible.

To reduce risks, travel light, keep phones, wallets, and purses concealed, stay alert, and choose daytime routes if possible. If you are robbed, it's safest to hand over what they ask for. Your life is worth far more.

“It’s going to be a pretty hard experience, but in the end, you’re going to get through it.”
-Elber

Support Services upon Arrival

The government recently started the **Return Home Plan** (*Plan Retorno al Hogar*) to connect returnees with government resources. Services may include transportation, a place to stay, and legal guidance. It’s new, so all services may not be available, but it’s a good idea to ask. Learn more at guatemala.gob.gt/plan-retorno-al-hogar.

- ★ The government used to offer deported citizens 1,200 Quetzales upon arrival, but this support is no longer available.

These non-government organizations may also be at the airport to help returnees:

The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** has permanent staff stationed at the Guatemalan Air Force’s Reception Centre, as well as at the Reception Center in Tecún Umán,

Ayutla, in San Marcos. They support Guatemalans returning from abroad, including those facing deportation, **before and after** their arrival in Guatemala. Services include job training, legal aid, and emotional support.

Casa del Migrante (tinyurl.com/casa-del-GT) should have a representative at the airport. They offer information about your rights and help with bus transfers, phone calls, and WiFi. They can provide a device to help you connect with friends and family over social media.

Casa del Migrante has several locations across Guatemala. They offer a safe place to wait for family pickup as well as other services, including temporary lodging, showers, and help with documents and job searches.

- ★ The directory (on p. 32) has a list of shelters in Guatemala that includes Casa del Migrante's locations as well as other shelters across the country.

CONAMIGUA (Consejo Nacional de Atención al Migrante de Guatemala, conamigua.gob.gt.) may also be there when you arrive. They can help you make phone calls to your family and friends. If you need transportation, they can help direct you to the right bus. If you need money, CONAMIGUA can help you get money from other groups or your local government.

To contact these or other nonprofits operating in Guatemala, see the directory (on p. 32).

Helpful Organizations and Agencies

In addition to the assistance offered through the government's Return Home Plan (described above), other reintegration services may be available to you after your arrival. These services can include job training, skills development, help accessing education, psychological services, or health care, or support to start a small business. The agencies and organizations listed below offer a range of reintegration services. You can find their contact details in the directory (on p. 32).

CAPMiR (Centros de Atención para Personas Migrantes y Refugiadas) supports migrants, asylum-seekers, and refugees in Guatemala. They offer clear information about rights and services, help with asylum requests, referrals for shelter, medical and psychological support, protection for children, basic supplies, and phone or internet access. CAPMiR has government-run locations in Guatemala City and a location in Esquipulas that is run by ACNUR, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. People can walk in for help or ask to be connected to nearby shelters and protection services. Email questions to guagu@unhcr.org, learn more at help.unhcr.org/guatemala. (Services may be reduced due to 2025 budget cuts.)

KIND (Kids In Need of Defense) helps youth returning to Guatemala and Honduras from the US and Mexico. They provide information and help with transportation, family reunification, and reintegration. To get help from KIND before or after deportation, call them in the US at (202)

824-8680, contact their family-separation team at separation@supportkind.org, get more information at info@supportkind.org, or refer a youth in need at supportkind.org/cmrrp.

Te Conecta helps returning Guatemalans find work. Whether you gained skills while living abroad or are starting fresh, they can help. They offer support with:

- Resumes
- Certifications for experience gained in the US
- Job training
- Job searches and job placement

They work closely with employers to connect people with jobs across Guatemala.

DESGUA (Desarrollo Sostenible para Guatemala) supports returned migrants, youth, and families affected by migration in southwestern Guatemala. They try to help people rebuild their lives and find new opportunities. Their services include:

- Job training
- Education programs
- Community projects

Vida Digna supports returned migrants, unaccompanied minors, and returning youth. They help returning young people validate their US school records so they can continue their education in Guatemala. Other services include:

- Family reunification (may include transportation to Guatemala City)
- Educational support
- Job and skills training
- Therapy and emotional/psychological support

Ministerio de Trabajo y Previsión Social (MINTRAB) is a government ministry that provides information and services around employment and training. Their services include:

- Temporary work programs for people with little work experience
- Job training Information and opportunities
- Assistance filing work-place complaints

These agencies and organizations are more concentrated in the cities, so it might be harder to access their services in rural areas.

Getting Your IDs and Documents

This section describes how to get the following documents:

- DPI (Documento Personal de Identificación)
 - Birth Certificate
 - Birth Certificates for US-Born Children
 - NIT (Número de Identificación Tributaria)
 - Driver's Licence
 - Passport
- ★ If you are reading this in the US, your consulate may be able to help you gather your documents. You can find consulates, manage appointments, and access consular services by visiting embaguাতেusa.gob.gt.

DPI (Documento Personal de Identificación)

In Guatemala, the national ID card is called a DPI. You'll need your DPI for legal identification and most official activities, including working, finding housing, banking, signing contracts, and voting.



Your DPI will be issued by the **Registro Nacional de las Personas (RENAP)**. RENAP is the government agency that manages all personal civil records. When you arrive at the airport, you can get your DPI with the return document you got from the Migration Institute (IGM) during registration. If you get your DPI then, it is free. If you wait and get it at a RENAP office outside of the airport, there will be a fee.

To get it later, you will need your return document or your deportation slip. The RENAP office will take your photo, fingerprints, and information and issue your DPI. Find RENAP offices and their hours here: renap.gob.gt/consulta-de-horarios-y-direcciones.

Birth Certificate

Birth certificates are very important in Guatemala. They are required for school enrollment, some formal employment, health insurance, getting married or divorced, and more.

Birth, marriage, and death certificates are all issued by RENAP. You can get your birth certificate in person at any RENAP office, online at renap.gob.gt, or through the RENAP SE app. Whichever way you choose, you will need to provide payment and your CUI (the 13-digit number from your DPI). The app offers digital certificates and DPI services, but users report occasional glitches.

If you have a child who was registered with RENAP, you can get their birth certificate in the same way. New births require in-person visits and a medical or midwife's report.

Birth Certificates for US-Born Children

If you have a child who has not been registered with RENAP, you will need to register them in order to get a Guatemalan birth certificate. This is necessary **to enroll them in school**.

US-born children can also be registered while they're still in the US. Do this at the nearest Guatemalan consulate. This will save time if they go with you to Guatemala, and it will empower the consulate to help them if you are detained in the US or deported. To find your nearest consulate, visit embaguatemala.gob.gt or minex.gob.gt.

To register your children from the US, you will need the original and two legible copies of the following documents:

- Your child's US birth certificate.
 - The birth certificates of both parents.
 - If you are Guatemalan, you *must* also bring a valid DPI or passport. A driver's license will not be accepted.
 - If you are not Guatemalan, you *must* bring a valid passport issued by your country of origin.
- ★ **Only recently reissued copies of the parents' birth certificates will be accepted.**
- Guatemalan parents must have birth certificates that were reissued by RENAP (National Registry of Immigrants) within the past six months.
 - Non-Guatemalan parents must have birth certificates that were reissued by their country of origin within the past year.

To register your US-born children after you have arrived in Guatemala, visit the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MINEX). This is much easier than going through RENAP. If possible, both parents and the child should be present. You will need to bring two legible copies and the original of the documents listed above in addition to a marriage certificate, if parents are married.

You will then be given a password, and in around three months, one parent can return to MINEX with that password to sign for their child's registration. Either parent can then go to any RENAP office to have their child's Guatemalan birth certificate printed.

This process is free, and you don't need an appointment. Find more information and MINEX office locations at minex.gob.gt.

NIT (Número de Identificación Tributaria)

Having an NIT, or tax identification number, is important for most major financial transactions, including being legally employed, buying or registering a car, starting a business, getting *facturas* (official receipts) for large purchases, paying taxes, and signing legal contracts.

To get an NIT, you must apply for one with the Superintendency of Tax Administration, more commonly known as the SAT office. You can request your NIT online at portal.sat.gob.gt/portal or in person at your local SAT office.

To apply online, you will need a valid email address, and a clear scan or photo of your DPI (this should be in PNG, JPG, or PDF format). The SAT will email when your NIT is ready and tell you where to pick it up. You will need to show your original DPI and proof of a proof of address document (like a utility bill) to get it.

Driver's License

If you plan on driving in Guatemala, you'll need to obtain a driver's license. You can only drive with a US license for 30 days after your arrival.

Random police stops are common. If you drive during your 30-day grace period, make sure to carry both your US license and your DPI. Once you have your driver's license, carry that with you whenever you drive, as well as your title and circulation card.

Cost: Guatemalan drivers licenses are valid for 1 to 5 years. You can save a little money by buying a licence that is valid for longer:

- 1 year – Q100
- 3 years – Q260
- 5 years – Q390

★ GTQ (or often just Q) is short for Guatemalan Quetzal, the Guatemalan currency. For the exchange rate at the time of publication, see the “Finances and Taxes” section on p. 25.

To get your first license, you must be at least 16, and you will need:

- The original and a copy of your valid DPI
- Digital Driver's Certificate from an authorized Evaluation Center (CECOVE)
- Proof of passing an eye exam issued by an approved clinic or ophthalmologist
- Receipt for payment for your license from a Banrural branch office. Banrural is a Guatemalan bank.
- Proof that you don't have any unpaid fines. A Traffic Delegate at a Maycom office will check if you have any fines.

If you are under 18, you will also need:

- Your birth certificate
- A Letter of Responsibility, prepared by a lawyer and signed by a parent or guardian (you can get a template of the Letter at maycom.com.gt)
- The original and a copy of that parent or guardian's DPI

Bring these documents with you to your local Centro de Emision de Licencias to get your license. To find the closest one, visit maycom.com.gt/agencias. For information on renewals, replacements, other types of driver's licenses, and more, visit maycom.com.gt.

Passport

If you plan to leave the country, you will need a passport. To get your passport, you will have to pay first and then make an appointment. At your scheduled appointment, you will get the passport. **You will need a valid DPI.**

Here are the steps:

1. Visit any local bank and ask to pay for a passport. The cost is 50 USD, and you will need to show your valid DPI. After you pay, the bank will give you a document confirming your payment. **Save this receipt.**
2. After you have paid, go to igm.gob.gt/informacion-pasaportes and enter the number on your receipt to schedule an appointment for passport processing. Print your appointment confirmation.
3. On the day of your appointment, bring the following documents:
 - Your original DPI (not a copy)
 - Your payment confirmation receipt from the bank
 - Your printed appointment confirmation

- ★ You can travel to Honduras, El Salvador, and Nicaragua with just your DPI. You must enter by land, and generally you will be allowed to stay for up to 90 days. For all other international travel, you will need a passport. **Note: Minors must have a valid passport to cross the border** and, if not travelling with both parents, notarized consent to travel.

Meeting Basic Needs

Living in Guatemala costs much less than living in the US. Many everyday things, like rent, food from the market, and public transportation cost less. As you might expect, most jobs also pay less. This section covers the costs of meeting your basic needs and some resources that may help. It discusses the following:

- Cost of Living

- Food
- Shelters
- Rentals
- Transportation
- Government Financial Support

Cost of Living

- ★ GTQ (or often just Q) is short for Guatemalan Quetzal, the Guatemalan currency. For the exchange rate at the time of publication, see the “Finances and Taxes” section on p. 25.

Food

Local markets in Guatemala have fresh fruits, vegetables, meats, and dry goods at low prices. You can also find small diners (*comedores*) in the markets that serve home-style meals for a few Quetzales.

Resources: The Ministry of Social Development (MIDES, mides.gob.gt, info@mides.gob.gt) **Community Dining program** (*Programa comedor social*) provides food for those who need it. For more information visit mides.gob.gt/programas-sociales/comedores . MIDES’ **Bolsa Social** program provides families living in Guatemala City with Q 250 per month to buy basic food items. For more information on other programs that may help, see the directory (on p. 35).

Shelters

There are many shelters in Guatemala that support migrants and families. Casa del Migrante operates shelters in several cities. They offer hygiene support, meals, and basic legal or medical services to those who need them. Many shelters are run by churches.

Shelters like Asociación de Mujeres de Petén Ixqik and La Alianza Guatemala provide legal support, psychological care, and long-term reintegration programs for women, children, and adolescents. Casa del Migrante shelters and others may provide additional services for migrants and returnees (learn more about Casa del Migrante on p. 5).

For a list of shelters and their contact information, see the directory on p. 32.

- ★ Try to call before you arrive. The availability of beds can vary based on demand and funding.

Renting

Cost: Housing prices depend on location, but they are significantly lower than in the US.

Upscale areas in Guatemala City, like Zona 10 and Zona 16 (Cayalá) are among the most expensive. Antigua is also more expensive, but many people deported from the US opt for this city because of the American community there. You can find more affordable options in nearby towns, and prices typically drop the farther you move from city centers. But there are fewer jobs away from the cities.

Extended families often lower their costs by sharing a home. If you have family you can stay with, even temporarily, it may be a good option as you get settled. In many areas, renting a single room may be a good, affordable option.

Contracts: If you plan to rent, always ask for a written contract before you decide on a place to live. Like a lease in the US, the contract protects you. In most cases, the landlord will already have a contract prepared. You may be responsible for a contract fee (often a small percentage of the monthly rent).

Renters and landlords usually meet to review and sign the contract at the landlord's attorney's office. Read the contract before you sign. Confirm that any informal agreements you made with the landlord are included.

Negotiating: You may be able to negotiate the cost of rent. If the rental needs repairs or yard maintenance, for instance, you might try offering those services for a discount in rent. Not every landlord is open to this, but some are. Make sure that whatever you negotiate ends up in your contract.

Deposits: Like in the US, the landlord will probably require that you pay a deposit. It is usually the amount of one month's rent, and it will be due at the same time as the first month's rent.

Unlike in the US, it is very common for landlords to keep this money when you move out. For this reason, many people choose not to pay their last month's rent, using their deposit to cover that month instead. This is a common practice, but it's best to ask the landlord.

Finding a place to rent: Word of mouth is the most common way to find a rental. You can also check bulletin boards at grocery stores and markets (*tiendas*). Websites like Encuentra24, Clasificadospl.com, and Mapainmueble.com offer online listings, as does Craig's List, but beware of scams. Some of the information on [renting in Mexico](#) may help you as well.

Resources: If you can't afford rent, government housing programs may be able to help. FOPAVI (fopavi.gob.gt) is a government program that offers financial support to families who want to buy a new home or fix up their current home. To apply, applicants need to complete a written application and certify their monthly income. The Requirements page on the FOPAVI website has information on eligibility: fopavi.gob.gt/index.php/requisitos.

For information on these and other programs that may help, see the directory (on p. 32).

★ If you plan to buy a home, Mi Primera Casa (miprimeraCasa.gob.gt) offers assistance to

first-time home buyers.

Transportation

Getting around in Guatemala can be overwhelming at first, especially in Guatemala City, but a little knowledge can go a long way.

Public buses (*camionetas*) and minibuses are the cheapest options, but they are crowded and can be unsafe. In Guatemala City, the green Transmetro buses provide an affordable, safer option. Mid-range options like tuk-tuks, pickup trucks, and taxis offer more flexibility but can vary in safety. More comfortable and expensive options include private hired drivers and, for longer distances, coach buses. In Guatemala City, Uber is also an option.

To travel from Guatemala City to other regions, use one of the two main bus terminals: **Centra Sur** in Zone 12 for southern and western routes, or **Centra Norte** in Zone 17 for northern and eastern routes. Centra Sur connects with Transmetro buses, while Centra Norte does not.

Bringing a Vehicle: If you plan to bring a vehicle from the US, expect shipping to cost at least \$1,500 plus import duties (15–25 percent) and a 12 percent VAT, along with port and customs fees. Some people avoid shipping by driving through Mexico, but this carries risks like poor roads, crime, and corruption, and you would still need to pay registration fees and import taxes. Beware of scams from private transport offers, and for current import fees, visit the SAT website (en.portal.sat.gob.gt/portal/#aduanas).

Government Financial Support

The government offers programs that provide cash, food, and other kinds of assistance to Guatemalans living in poverty. Some programs are specifically for senior citizens, others support young people. **Retorno al Hogar** specifically supports returned and deported Guatemalans. Find more information about these and other government programs in the directory (on p. 32).

Employment

You can find job training and employment opportunities in a variety of ways in Guatemala: through word of mouth, bulletin boards in your community, networking, online, through employment agencies, and more. This chapter covers the following topics:

- Employment Programs
- Formal Employment
- Helpful Job Websites
- Higher Wage Opportunities

For more general information on finding work after deportation, you may want to read through the “[Employment](#)” chapter in the Mexico section of this guide.

If you are currently incarcerated in the US and face deportation upon your release, we recommend requesting our reentry guide, *Mapping Your Future* or access it online, here: tinyurl.com/MYFNA. It contains information that you can use before your release as well as after.

Employment Programs

These organizations offer training programs, certifications, and employment services to help you connect with job opportunities:

Te Conecta (teconectaong.com) offers job training, resume help, paperwork support, certifications, essential computer skills training, and job placement assistance for Guatemalans returning from the United States. They can also help guide you in starting your own business. Te Conecta works closely with recruiter services, INTECAP, and IOM.

INTECAP (intecap.edu.gt/becasretornados) provides vocational training, certification programs, online and in-person courses, English placement testing and classes, and technical-skills development. Their classes can prepare you for jobs in mechanics and industrial maintenance, culinary arts and hospitality, technology and mechatronics, and more. Most courses range from Q75 to Q250 per month, and their Becas para Retornados program focuses on job training for returned Guatemalans.

Additionally, other organizations (like Vida Digna) and a number of government programs (including Improving the Socioeconomic Conditions of Women, Retorno al Hogar, Quedate, and Social Scholarships) either fund job training or provide training opportunities. Find more information about these and other employment programs in the directory (on p. 32).

Formal Employment

Getting a job in the formal sector can offer more security and long term benefits. These jobs follow labor laws, provide a legal work contract, and offer fair pay, safe working conditions, and other basic rights.

- ★ Formal employment also includes registration with **IGSS** (Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social). IGSS provides access to health care through their clinics and hospitals. Learn more at igssgt.org.

Formal jobs can be found in many areas, such as government, factories, businesses, farming, and health care. Although we are not endorsing them, the ten largest formal employers in Guatemala are:

- **Cementos Progreso.** *Cement and construction materials*
- **Grupo Financiero Banrural.** *Banking services and finance*
- **Corporacion Multi Inversiones (CMI).** *Food, energy, real estate, and finance industries*
- **Coca-Cola FEMSA.** *Beverage production and distribution*
- **Walmart Guatemala.** *Supermarket chain*
- **Nestle Guatemala.** *Food and beverages*
- **McDonald's Guatemala.** *Fast-food chain*
- **Tigo Guatemala.** *Telecommunications*
- **Claro Guatemala.** *Telecommunications*
- **PRONICO (Mayaniquel, S.A.).** *Nickel mining and processing*

Helpful Job Websites

If you have internet access, job search websites and Facebook can be a great way to find leads, too (but look out for scams). You can browse job openings across Guatemala here:

- empleo.gt
- tecoloco.com.gt
- computrabajo.com.gt
- unmejorempelo.com.gt
- quieroaplicar.com
- tuempleo.mintrabajo.gob.gt
- clasificadospl.com/empleos
- guatework.net – (employment agency)

Higher Wage Opportunities

Not all of the opportunities below require that you speak English, but knowing English will help. For information on classes to improve your English or Spanish, see “Language Classes” below.

Call Centers: Most major call centers are in Guatemala City. If you are bilingual, call centers offer some of the highest wages in the country.

Tourism: Hotels, restaurants, tour companies, and travel agencies in tourist areas often hire people who can speak both English and Spanish. Major tourist areas in Guatemala include Antigua, Guatemala City, and the Lake Atitlan area.

Entrepreneurship: You might also consider starting your own business. Many people in Guatemala find success working independently. Starting your own business is much easier and cheaper in Guatemala than in the United States. Organizations like **Te Conecta** can help you through the process (find their contact information in the directory on p. 37).

Interested in online work? Look under “[Online Employment](#)” in the Mexico section of the

guide.

Education

Finding good educational options in Guatemala can be difficult, especially in rural or low-income areas. But today there are many programs working to make learning easier and better for people of all ages. Whether you want to continue your own education or you're planning for your children's education, this section can help. It covers the following topics:

- Enrolling Children and Transferring Their Progress
- Bilingual Schools
- Adult Basic Education and Language Classes
- Vocational Training
- Higher Education
- Transferring US Credits and Validating US Degrees
- Scholarships

Enrolling Children and Transferring Their Progress

Guatemala's public education system is organized into three main levels:

- Pre-primary (*Preprimaria*): Ages 4 to 6
- Primary (*Primaria*): Grades 1 to 6; ages 7 to 12
- Secondary (*Media*)
 - *Ciclo de Educación Básica*: Ages 13 to 15, Grades 7 to 9
 - *Ciclo de Educación Diversificada*: Ages 16 to 18, Grades 10 to 11 or 12 (the duration depends on the specific program)

If your child has at least one year of US schooling at the primary level, you may need to take a few extra steps to ensure that they get placed into the appropriate grade.

First, visit your nearest public school or your preferred private school to ask about their enrollment periods and registration process.

Private schools may be able to decide what grade your child should be in based on their prior schooling or their performance on an aptitude test. **Public schools** will require that you go through the foreign studies equivalency (*equivalencia de estudios*) process with the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). The details of this process may vary depending on your department (state).

Note: If your child was born in the US, you will need to register them with RENAP before you can enroll them in school. For more information, see "Birth Certificates for US-Born Children" on p. 8.

Typically, your next step will be to complete and submit an Equivalency Request form (*Solicitud de Equivalencia de Estudios*) along with copies of the following documents:

- Your DPI or passport
- Your child's DPI or, if they are over 18, their DPI
- An apostilled copy **and** a certified translation (*traducción jurada*) of your child's US academic record or their most recent report card (*boleta de notas*)

US academic records must be apostilled by the Secretary of State of the issuing US state. For more information on the apostille process, see the "[Plan for Possible Deportation](#)" chapter.

- ★ A *traducción jurada*, or sworn translation, is a translation done by an authorized translator. Authorized translators (*traductores jurados*) have been sworn in by the Guatemalan Ministry of Foreign Affairs (*Ministerio de Relaciones Exteriores*).

You can do this online or in person. To submit your request online, visit MINEDUC's online platform at bpm.mineduc.gob.gt/login. To get the form and submit it in person, visit your regional Dirección Departamental de Educación. You may need to make an online appointment first. Some MINEDUC departments may accept digital records, but others will require printed records.

Note: Ask for assistance at the school where your child will be enrolling. A school administrator can forward your form to your Dirección Departamental. They will also handle your child's registration in the national education system (SIRE) once the equivalency is approved.

Bilingual Schools

All public education is only in Spanish (and occasionally indigenous languages), but there are several private bilingual (English/Spanish) schools in Guatemala that follow a US-style curriculum. A few of the more well known schools include:

- American School of Guatemala (CAG)
- Colegio Interamericano
- Antigua International School
- Christian Academy of Guatemala

These schools offer US as well as Guatemalan accreditation, but their tuition can be high.

Adult Basic Education and Language Classes

The Ministry of Education offers free and flexible programs to help you complete your primary and secondary education. These programs are designed for adults and young people who want better job opportunities and a second chance at their education.

The **Correspondence Education for Adults Program** (PEAC) offers an accelerated path to completing your primary education. It is available at no cost to people who didn't finish school. Learn more at tinyurl.com/PEAC-GT.

The **National Alternative Education Program** (PRONEA) provides free primary and secondary education through both online and self-guided lessons. It also allows students to earn certification through proficiency exams based on life experience. Learn more at tinyurl.com/PRONEA-GT.

The **School in Your Home** (ISEA) is a private (not free) educational service that helps students earn their primary and secondary certificates. ISEA diplomas are recognized by the US Department of Education as well as Guatemala's Ministry of Education (MINEDUC). Find more details at isea.edu.gt/programas.

Language Classes

To open up more employment options, you may want to consider language classes. In addition to the English-language classes offered through INTECAP (see p. 37), the Language Learning Center (Centro de Aprendizaje de Lenguas or CALUSAC) run by the government also offers English classes. For more information visit: calusacusac.usac.edu.gt.

The chart below contains a few private Spanish-language programs. (For online language-learning resources, see the "[Education](#)" chapter in the Mexico section of this guide.)

Program	Description	Contact
Ixchel School	Antigua-based language school with hourly rates for online and in-person one-on-one Spanish classes and an immersion program that includes room and board.	Phone Number: (502) 7832-3440 ixchelschool.com
Antigua Spanish Academy	Antigua-based language school offering online and in-person courses adapted to individual students' needs. Prices vary by program. Endorsed by the Ministry of Education.	Phone Number: (502) 5735-4638 antiguenaschool@gmail.com spanishacademyantigua.com
Community Spanish School	San Pedro-based school that supports the community and offers one-on-one, one-on-two,	Phone Number: (502) 5842-4391 communityspanishschool@gmail.com communityspanishschool.com

	and group sessions, in-person and online. Prices vary.	
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Vocational Training

Low or no-cost vocational training programs can help you gain important skills as you build or rebuild your career.

Municipal Vocational and Human Training Centers Program (CEMUCAF) offers free training to help people learn new trades or build their skills. Their courses are designed for different education levels in over 120 areas, including textiles and sewing, cooking and baking, beauty services, computer skills, construction, crafts, and entrepreneurship. Learn more at tinyurl.com/Training-GT.

Vida Digna, Te Conecta, and INTECAP (described above in the “[Arriving in Guatemala](#)” and “[Employment](#)” sections) and the government’s job training programs (listed on p. 33) also provide affordable vocational training opportunities. You can find these agencies’ and organizations’ contact information in the directory (on p. 32).

Higher Education (*Educación Superior*)

Universities in Guatemala are generally more affordable than in the US, and many schools offer scholarships or financial aid. Both public and private universities are available, but due to their low cost and high demand, public universities are harder to get into.

Universidad de San Carlos de Guatemala (USAC) is the main public university in Guatemala. USAC offers many programs and, like other public universities, it costs Guatemalans very little to attend (but graduate studies may cost more). Learn more at usac.edu.gt.

The tuition and fees at private universities can range from Q9000 to Q40,000 per year, depending on the institution.

Scholarships

The government **Social Scholarships** program offers conditional cash transfers for secondary and higher education. Find more information on this and other government programs that may be helpful in the directory (on p. 32).

Most other higher education financial aid and scholarships are distributed by the universities themselves. To learn more, contact or visit your preferred university.

Transferring US Credits and Validating US Degrees

To enroll in a university or to qualify for certain jobs, you may need to validate any diplomas or degrees you earned in the US. If you began your college education in the US and would like to continue your studies at a Guatemalan university, you will need to transfer your US credits.

Validating High School Diplomas: You can validate your US high school diplomas through the Ministerio de Educación (MINEDUC). They publish a resource on how to do so through this link: tinyurl.com/EquivalenciadeEstudios.

Transferring primary and secondary school progress: See “Enrolling Children and Transferring Their Progress” above (on p. 16).

- ★ **Because the validation process can seem confusing**, the nonprofit **Vida Digna** helps returning young people validate their US school records so they can continue their education in Guatemala. Find them in the directory on p. 37.

Validating College Diplomas: To validate a US college degree, you need to go through a formal process called *revalidación de estudios universitarios*. The Dirección General de Docencia (DIGED) at the Universidad de San Carlos (USAC) is in charge of this process.

Typical required documents include:

- Your US college diploma (original and a certified copy)
- Your academic transcript (*certificado de notas*)
- Proof that your US university is accredited
- A copy of your passport or DPI

All US documents may need to be apostilled and translated by a sworn translator (*traducción jurada*). You will also need to complete an application form and pay a fee, which ranges from around Q500 to Q1,500. The process typically takes from 2 to 6 months. For more detailed information on the process, visit portalregistro.usac.edu.gt/formulario_incorporado or email incorporacionesrye@adm.usac.edu.gt.

Transferring College Credits: Each Guatemalan university has its own process for evaluating and transferring US college credits. Typically, you will need to provide transcripts, diplomas, and course information from your university in the United States. Your academic records may need to be notarized, apostilled, and/or translated by a sworn translator in Guatemala.

If you plan to transfer to USAC, find more information at portalregistro.usac.edu.gt/tramites or by emailing equivalenciasrye@adm.usac.edu.gt. If you plan to transfer credits to another institution, you will need to contact that institution to learn more.

- ★ For tips on continuing your US education online, see the “[Education](#)” chapter in the Mexico section of this guide.

Health

This section covers the following topics in health:

- Public and Private Health Care
- Health Insurance
- Low-Cost Clinics and Pharmacies
- Addiction Support
- Mental Health Services

Public and Private Health Care

Public Health Care: In Guatemala, all citizens have free access to public hospitals and clinics. The Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS) runs them. They are meant to help everyone, but their services can be limited due to low funding. There may be long waits, or they might run out of medicine or supplies.

IGSS (*Instituto Guatemalteco de Seguridad Social*): IGSS is Guatemala's public social-security system. It provides health care, work-injury insurance, maternity care, and pensions for enrolled workers and their dependent children. If you work in the formal sector, you probably qualify for IGSS healthcare coverage.

The IGSS healthcare system has its own hospitals and clinics, and it covers the costs for general and specialized medical and surgical care, including:

- Dental care
- Pharmaceutical assistance
- Rehabilitation
- Maternal care
- Laboratory and radiology tests
- Social Services
- Transportation

Learn more at www.igssgt.org.

Social Works of Brother Saint Peter (Obras Sociales del Santo Hermano Pedro, OSSHP) is a nonprofit organization that provides medical care and even surgeries to low-income Guatemalans. They work with volunteer doctors from the United States and perform over 6,000 surgeries every year, but there may be a waiting list for surgeries and procedures. Learn more at hermanopedrogt.org.

Private Health Care: Private clinics and hospitals usually offer higher-quality care and more personal attention. Many of the best doctors and most modern private medical facilities are in Guatemala City. Even without insurance, private care is often more affordable than in the US.

General visits to the doctor cost around Q150 to Q200. Specialists cost from Q400 to Q600.

Health Insurance

Private health insurance will cover around 70 to 90 percent of certain medical services. This means you would be responsible for 10 to 30 percent of those costs. Most insurance plans include some amount of dental coverage, and vision is usually not included.

Private insurance plans cost between Q300 and Q1500 or more per month. It depends on the company you work for, your age, and the type of plan you choose (basic individual, family, or senior plans are usually available). For certain surgeries and procedures, you may need to have insurance for at least 6 to 12 months before coverage will begin to apply.

Two common private insurance companies are Salud Siempre (saludsiempre.com.gt) and RobleMed (elroble.com). Unfortunately, if you have pre-existing conditions, your coverage might be delayed or even denied.

Low-Cost Clinics and Pharmacies

Government hospitals in Guatemala offer free care, but wait times can be long. If you're returning from the US, the conditions may feel very different from what you're used to. Some hospitals are crowded and have limited resources. However, there are organizations in Guatemala that provide low-cost medical services to support the community. You may find faster care at a low cost, sometimes in more comfortable settings, with these organizations:

- **Rekko Clinics** (rekko.org/clinicas-medicas-rekko): Low-cost medical centers and pharmacies offering general medicine, dentistry, pediatrics, and gynecology. Mainly located around Antigua and Yepocapa
- **ODIM Medical Services** (odinguatemala.org/medical-services): Accessible medical care and support for vulnerable communities throughout Guatemala
- **Wings Guatemala** (wingsguate.org): Medical assistance and health programs focusing on reproductive health and family planning.
- **Farmacia PROAM** (proam.gob.gt): Lower-cost pharmacies. You can often save money on your medications at these government pharmacies.

Addiction Support

Starting over in a country you barely remember can be stressful or frightening. It's not uncommon for people to turn to alcohol or drugs to cope. If you or someone you know is struggling, you're not alone. There are support groups and recovery meetings in Guatemala where you can find help and start to heal. It's not easy, but you don't have to go through it

alone. **Alcoholics Anonymous** (aaorg.gt) and **Narcotics Anonymous** (naguante.org) offer free support and virtual and in-person support groups all over the country.

Additionally, **Renacer Rehabilitation Center** (tinyurl.com/renacer-GT) is a paid residential rehabilitation program for young and adult men with drug or alcohol addiction problems. The program is located in Sumpango and run by OSSHP (learn more about OSSHP on p. 21).

Mental Health Services

These organizations can help to provide counseling and psychological support for migrants and their families:

CONAMIGUA (conamigua.gob.gt): Learn more about CONAMIGUA on p. 5.

Casa del Migrante (tinyurl.com/casa-del-GT): Learn more about Casa del Migrante on p. 5.

Vida Digna Guatemala (vidadignaguatemala.org): This organization provides help to migrant youth and their families; they also focus on family reunification.

- ★ For mental health emergencies (as well as medical, police, and fire emergencies), you can call **110**, the National Police Emergency Line.

Communication

To find work, stay close to your loved ones, and rebuild your life when you arrive in Guatemala, staying connected will matter. This section helps you do that. It covers the following topics:

- Cell Phones
- Internet Access
- Calling to and from the US

Cell Phones

Although landlines are still common in Guatemala, having a cell phone is more than just a convenience. In an emergency, it can save your life. If you get lost or stranded, you can call for help. You can also share your live location with someone you trust.

The two major phone companies in Guatemala are Tigo (tigo.com.gt) and Claro (claro.com.gt/personas). Smaller companies exist, but Tigo and Claro offer the best coverage. They both offer:

- Cell phone service (prepaid and by contract)
- Data packages
- Packages including landlines, internet, and cable for your home

Unlocking your US Cell Phone: If you still have your US cell phone and want to keep using it, you may need to have your US carrier “unlock” it for use outside the US. But check to see if it’s locked first: Replace your old SIM card with a Guatemalan SIM card. Supermarkets and corner shops (*tiendas*) sell them, as do all Claro and Tigo stores. If the phone works with the new SIM card, you’re good! If not, it’s probably locked.

To unlock it, contact your US carrier or visit their website. They will usually ask you a few questions about your phone and then unlock it for you for free. You may want to ask them to confirm that your phone will be compatible with the networks used in Guatemala. Most modern phones work anywhere, but older ones may not.

- ★ If your phone carrier is unable to help you unlock your phone, you may choose to contact a third-party unlocking service. These services can be risky, so be cautious and do your research first.

Buying a Cell Phone and Cell Service: If you don’t have a cell phone, Tigo and Claro offer basic cell phones and smartphones with or without monthly service plans (contracts). Some plans include international calls to the US, Canada, and Central America. If you have loved ones still in the US, ask about international call packages when you sign up.

If you don’t want to sign a contract, you can instead buy your minutes and data on a prepaid SIM card. When your prepaid minutes/data run out, you can buy more at grocery stores, *tiendas*, online, or at a phone store.

Internet Access

If you can’t get on the internet from your home, and buying an internet package from Claro or Tigo isn’t possible, there are other options:

- Like in the US, restaurants and cafes often offer free Wi-Fi. Buy something small, like a coffee, and ask for the password.
- Internet cafes are still common in Guatemala. You can rent computer time to use the internet, print, scan, and make copies.
- Some cities and towns offer free WiFi in the main plaza.

Calling to and from the US

To Call the US: Dial the international access code (001) + the US country code (1) + the 3-digit area code + the 7-digit phone number.

- **Example:** 001 + 1 + 123 + 456-7890

To Call Guatemala from the US: Dial the international access code (011) + Guatemala’s country code (502) + the local 8-digit phone number.

- **Example:** 011 + 502 + 1234-5678

WhatsApp. Everyone in Guatemala uses WhatsApp, including businesses. You can call, text, share your location, and video chat in the app. You can also make **international calls** using your data or WiFi, which can be cheaper than buying a plan with international minutes.

Finances and Taxes

This section covers:

- The Quetzal
- Bank Accounts
- Loans
- Financial Education

For more general information on finances in Mexico and Central America, you may want to read through the “[Finances, Credit, and Taxes](#)” chapter of the Mexico section of this guide. If you are currently incarcerated in the US and want general information on finances, we recommend requesting our reentry guide, *Mapping Your Future*. Access a pdf here: tinyurl.com/MYFNA.

The Quetzal

The Guatemalan quetzal (GTQ) is Guatemala’s official currency. At the time of publication, the exchange rate is 7.62 Guatemalan quetzales to one US dollar. This rate can change but is usually very steady.

Bank Accounts

There are many places to bank in Guatemala, some small and some big. Before choosing a bank, research the area where you will be living to confirm that you’ll have branch offices and ATMs (*cajeros*) nearby.

The main banks include:

- Banco Industrial (BI), corporacionbi.com/gt/bancoindustrial
- Banco de Desarrollo Rural (Banrural), banrural.com.gt/site/personas
- Banco Agromercantil (BAM), bam.com.gt
- Banco de América Central (BAC), baccredomatic.com
- Citibank Guatemala, citibank.com/icg/sa/latam/guatemala

BAC and Banrural will let you create an account online, but most banks still require you to open an account in person.

To open an account, you'll generally need:

- Your DPI or passport
- Proof of address (like a utility or landline phone bill)
- A small amount of cash to make your first deposit

Be sure to check the bank's website for requirements ahead of time, as some banks may have additional requirements.

Loans

Coming home and starting over isn't always easy, but it's also a chance to build something new for yourself and your family. Many banks offer loans to buy houses, start businesses, or for other needs. To apply for a loan, you will usually need to show the bank that you have a job and earn enough money to pay them back.

- ★ **Be Careful with Private Loans (*Prestamistas*).** In some communities, people offer private loans. These individuals are sometimes called *prestamistas* or loan sharks. Please be very careful with this kind of loan. These loans are not regulated by the law, and if you miss a payment, things can quickly become dangerous. Some *prestamistas* may ask for the title to your home or other valuable property as a guarantee. **If you can't pay on time, they might become aggressive or even violent.**

Financial Education

The Superintendencia de Bancos (SIB) is the government office in charge of making sure banks and financial services in Guatemala are safe and work correctly. They offer lessons to help you better understand how to manage money, use financial services wisely, and protect yourself from fraud.

You can access their free guide, ABCs of Financial Education, at tinyurl.com/SIB-ABCs and their free financial-education course at tinyurl.com/SIB-FinEd.

Many **local banks** (e.g., Banco Azteca, BAC Credomatic, Bantrab) also offer free educational programs.

Taxes

If you have an NIT (Número de Identificación Tributaria) and earn money in Guatemala, the law requires you to pay taxes. If you are an employee with formal work, your employer usually takes income tax out of your paycheck and sends it directly to the SAT (*Superintendencia de Administración Tributaria*, or Superintendency of Tax Administration, which is like the IRS in the US). If you work independently, freelance, or earn income outside of a formal job, you must file your own tax forms and pay any amounts owed.

You can pay taxes at any bank authorized by the SAT or online through the Declaraguat portal and BancaSAT system. To learn more, you can find tutorials and help pages at sat.gob.gt.

Culture and Connection

Life in Guatemala may be very different from what you're used to. It may take time to adjust, and you might make a few mistakes along the way—and that's OK. Over time, you may also discover or rediscover things you love about your Guatemalan culture. This chapter covers civic life and offers background information and tips that may help you feel more at home. Its topics include:

- Voting
- Cultural Conventions
- LGBTQ+ Community

Voting

As an adult Guatemalan citizen (18 years or older), you have the right to vote. In most cases, your deportation will not affect that right. Certain criminal convictions in Guatemala can affect your right to vote, but convictions from other countries usually will not.

Quick Facts About Guatemala Elections:

- **Election Frequency:** Every 4 years
- **General Election Month:** June
- **Runoff Election (if needed):** August
- **Positions Elected:** President, Vice President, Congress (Diputados), Mayors, Municipal Councils, Members of Central American Parliament
- **Term Length For All Offices:** 4 years
- **Presidential Term Limit:** 1 term only (no re-election)
- **Term Limits for Other Offices:** None
- **Political Parties:** Guatemala has *many* political parties, each with its own ideas. The TSE keeps a list of all current parties at tinyurl.com/TSE-parties.

To learn more about Guatemala's major political parties and how its government works, check out Alianza Americas' English-language toolkit: tinyurl.com/GT-Gov-Overview.

Voting Requirements. To vote in Guatemala, you need to:

- Have a valid DPI
- Be a Guatemalan citizen
- Be at least 18 years of age

- Register with the Supreme Electoral Tribunal (TSE)

If you still need to register, you can do so at your nearest TSE office. Find your local TSE office at tinyurl.com/TSE-offices, and check to see if you're already registered at tinyurl.com/TSE-reg.

- ★ When you get or renew your DPI (see p. 7), RENAP may be able to automatically register you with the TSE. And if you already have your DPI, your local RENAP office may still be able to help you register with the TSE.

Cultural Conventions

Many of the cultural differences you will experience in Guatemala are similar to those throughout Mexico and Latin America. This section includes differences that are specific to Honduras. For more general information, you may want to read the “[Cultural Encounters](#)” section in the Mexico section of this guide.

Greetings. Guatemalan greetings reflect the country's warm and polite culture. People often greet strangers in passing, whether on the street, in a store, or waiting in line. After living in the US, where life can feel rushed and impersonal, it may be refreshing to experience such kindness in daily moments. These small but meaningful moments may come to help you feel more connected and at home.

Protests, Roadblocks, and Local News. In Guatemala, peaceful protests (*manifestaciones*) are a common and powerful way for people to speak up. Whether it's tuk-tuk drivers, farmers, or everyday citizens, people often come together to demand change—and it works. These protests have helped bring real results in everything from local labor issues to national politics.

These protests often involve roadblocks (*bloqueos*). These can pop up with little warning and may include ropes, rocks, burning tires, or parked vehicles blocking the roadways. Many larger protests are announced ahead of time, but some happen without much notice. You might find yourself stuck in traffic for hours. Staying connected to local news can help:

- Radio Santa Cruz (Alta Verapaz), Radio San Jose (Quetzaltenango), and Tzuritamal Radio (Solola) offer community news over the radio.
- Chapin Noticias, Santa Lucía Cotzumalguapa News, and the Chiquimala Times maintain Facebook pages where they post reports on missing people, immigration, local government issues, and public safety updates.
- Soy502 and the newspaper *La Hora* are also popular for news. Soy502 is very active on social media.

Religion. The Guatemalan constitution protects your right to freely practice any religion. Catholicism has been the main religion in Guatemala for a long time, but Evangelical churches have grown in recent years, especially in rural areas.

Whether you are religious or not, you'll see signs of faith just about everywhere. You might even see people preaching in stores and parks, on buses, and from the streets. Towns celebrate Catholic saints with fireworks and music year-round. The biggest celebration is Semana Santa (Holy Week), when streets are lined with colorful sawdust carpets and giant processions fill the towns. Antigua's Holy Week festivities are world famous, and bring in around 3 million visitors each year.

Cities offer more religious diversity than rural areas. In Guatemala City, you can get in touch with the Muslim community through the Centro Islámico de Guatemala (502 5318-5542, abdelaucar@yahoo.com) and the Jewish community through the Comunidad Judía de Guatemala (502 2201-1500, cjg@comunidadjudia.com).

Noise. Guatemala is full of life and sounds. Fireworks, big firecrackers (*bombas*), loud music, roosters, street dogs barking, buses, motorcycles, tuk tuks, spontaneous parades, and worship are all part of daily life. Adjusting to this after living in the US might be challenging, especially at night.

Some municipalities have noise ordinances, but they're commonly not enforced. If you're sensitive to noise, choose your home carefully. Living near a main street, church, or event space will typically mean lots of sound at all hours. If you're sensitive to noise and you can afford it, you might consider living inside a gated community.

Negotiating. Negotiating is a normal part of shopping in Guatemala, especially with street vendors or in outdoor markets, where prices aren't always fixed. It's okay to politely ask for a better deal. If you've been in the US a long time, vendors might assume you're not local and set higher prices. You may want to stand back and listen to what other locals are being charged before you talk to the vendor. It's just part of the local rhythm in Guatemala. Be kind, smile, and don't be afraid to walk away if the price isn't right.

LGBTQ+ Community

In Guatemala City and Quetzaltenango, pride parades and other activities take place every year in June and have seen increased participation in recent years. Moreover, there is a LGBTQ+-friendly nightlife scene in the capital, including venues like G Lounge, Genetic Majestic Club, and Black Club. Beyond the celebratory spaces, there are also a number of organizations dedicated to advocating for LGBTQ+ rights, fostering community, and providing direct services. Find them in the directory on p. 37. However, much of Guatemala is still socially conservative, and most public expressions of the LGBTQ+ community and culture are found only in larger cities.

Safety

It's normal to feel nervous about coming back to Guatemala, and safety is a real concern. You can stay safe by knowing your neighborhoods and being careful about what you carry with you.

Here are a few things to be aware of.

LGBTQ+ Safety

Unfortunately, safety can be a concern for LGBTQ+ individuals in Guatemala, especially for trans people. Discrimination and violence still happen, and legal protections are limited.

But there is progress. Pride events continue to grow, and more voices are speaking up for equality. If you identify as LGBTQ+, stay aware, connect with trusted community groups, and know you're not alone. Check the Guatemala directory for supportive organizations.

Women's Safety

Femicide is when women are killed because of their gender. This is a serious problem in Guatemala. Many victims are harmed by partners or family members, and most cases go unsolved.

Sexual violence is also a major problem. Guatemala has high numbers of reported rapes and underage pregnancies each year. Sadly, many go unreported due to fear and lack of trust in the justice system.

Línea 1572: Dial 1572 from anywhere in the country to reach this **national 24/7 hotline**. This state-run service is for women who are victims of physical, sexual, or psychological violence. They provide immediate referrals, emergency response, and guidance. If you are in immediate danger, first call 110 (PNC) and then dial 1572.

In addition to the women's shelters listed in directory (e.g., Asociación de Mujeres de Petén Ixqik and La Alianza Guatemala), here are a few other important resources:

CAIMUS centers (ggm.org.gt/caimus) are located across Guatemala. They offer survivor services including legal help, psychological support, and social services. CAIMUS centers also offer temporary shelter (*albergue temporal*) for women whose lives are in danger.

The **Ministerio de Salud Pública y Asistencia Social (MSPAS)** operates specialized clinics for survivors of sexual violence. Located in most public hospitals, they provide medical care, forensic collection, disease prevention, and psychological support for victims of sexual violence.

Women in serious danger or who need legal advocacy may want to contact **Fundación Sobrevivientes**, a women's rights NGO offering legal assistance, counselling, and support.

See the directory for contact information and information on other women's resources.

Political Violence and Protests

Guatemala continues to face political unrest and corruption. In recent years, Indigenous leaders, activists, and journalists reporting on land rights and corruption have been targeted and killed for speaking out.

While political and anti-corruption protests are common and generally remain peaceful, they can be unpredictable. To stay safe, always be aware of your surroundings and exit routes when attending a demonstration. Try to stay on the outer edges of the event so that you can easily leave in an emergency.

Emergency and Crime Hotlines

- **110: National Civil Police** (*Policía Nacional Civil, PNC*). Call for all active crimes and emergency situations.
- **1572: Violence Against Women** (*Ministerio Público*). Call to report domestic or sexual violence.
- **1561: Crime Stoppers** (Crime Stoppers Guatemala and PNC). Call to anonymously report all serious crimes.
- **1531: Police Corruption** (*Centro Anticorrupción Policial, Police Anti-Corruption Center*). Call to anonymously file complaints against the police.

Legal Assistance

The legal system in Guatemala can be frustrating or confusing to understand on your own. If you need legal representation or advice after your return, these free and low-cost resources may help:

The **Instituto de la Defensa Pública Penal (IDPP)** offers **free legal defense** for individuals accused of crimes who cannot afford a lawyer. Unlike public defenders in the US, their services must be requested. They can be requested by a judge, the national civic police, or any citizen facing a trial. Learn more at idpp.gob.gt.

Trócaire Nonprofit Legal Support provides legal help and other forms of support to vulnerable populations. Learn more at trocaire.org/countries/guatemala.

Pro Bono Legal Services are free and provided by volunteer lawyers, usually through a law firm or foundation. A few options include:

- Asociacion Pro Bono de Guatemala (mayora-mayora.com/pro-bono)
- Red Pro Bono de las Américas (redprobono.org)
- Clarity Law (claritylaw.com/pro-bono-y-rse)

★ **Were your rights violated during detention or deportation?** The migrant-rights

organization Justice in Motion helps migrants after they have left the US. Learn more at justiceinmotion.org/defender-network.

Resource Directory

Shelters			
<p>Disclaimer: We've done our best to list all shelters that we believe are open to migrants. Some may be full or have closed down. To get current information, we recommend calling these shelters, asking other returnees, and contacting the churches and non-profits listed here.</p>			
Name	Address	Contact	Website
Asociación de Mujeres de Petén Ixqik	6av y 6a calle equina, zona 3, Barrio Valle Nuevo, San Benito, Petén		tinyurl.com/peten-ixqik
Casa del Migrante	15 Ave 1, Cdad de Guatemala, Guatemala	(502) 2230-2781 cscalapm@gmail.com	tinyurl.com/casa-del-GT
Casa del Migrante Belén	7257+5QM, Carr al Ceibo, El Ceibo, Guatemala		
Casa del Migrante Betania	W463+Q7Q, Flores, Guatemala	(502) 5015-0683	
Casa del Migrante Emaus Adesi	Zona 1, Playa Grande Ixcán, Quiché	(502) 5807-5163	
Casa del Migrante San José	HM53+44F, CA-10, Esquipulas, Guatemala	(502) 5933-0760	
Casa del Migrante Scalabrini Guatemala	15th Ave 1-94 A, Zone 1, Guatemala City	(502) 2230-2781 casadelmigranteguate@gmail.com	scalabriniguate.org
Casa del Migrante,	0 Av 0-22 Colonia Olguita de	(502) 7776-8416 (502)	scalabriniguate.org

Tecún Umán, San Marcos	Leon, Tecún Umán, San Marcos	7776-8417 casadelmigrantetecun@gmail.com	
Casa Peregrina del Migrante Santo Hermano Pedro	3era Calle 3-31 Zona 12, Colonia el Mezquital, Villa Nueva Guatemala	(502) 2474-9976 (502) 2477-2076	
Covenant House/ La Alianza Guatemala	13 Avenida 0-37 Zona 2 de Mixco Colonia La Escuadrilla Ciudad de Guatemala	(502) 2509-5555 development@la-alianza.org.gt	la-alianza.org.gt
Pastoral de Movilidad Humana de la Conferencia Episcopal de Guatemala	Kilometer 15 Calzada Roosevelt 4-54 Zone 3 of Mixco Guatemala City	(502) 2432-5654 (502) 5599-9885 frjuanluis@hotmail.com	movilidadhumana.com

Government Institutes				
Name	Address	Contact	Website	Description
Guatemala Tax Administration (SAT)	Multiple locations		portal.sat.gob.gt/portal	Federal tax collection, new business registration
Guatemalan Institute of Migration	6ta Ave 3-11, Zona 4, Guatemala	(502) 2411-2411	igm.gob.gt	"Return Home Plan" initiative, assistance reintegrating to Guatemala, passports
Ministry of Education Guatemala	6a Calle 1-87 Zona 10, 01010 Guatemala	(502) 2411-9595 info@mineduc.gob.gt	edu.mineduc.gob.gt	Training and certifications, adult education programs, can certify training from other countries

Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (MINTRAB)	7 Ave 3-33, Zona 9, Edif Torre Empresarial, Guatemala	(502) 2422-2501 comunicacion@mintrabajo.gob.gt	mintrabajo.gob.gt	Job fairs, employment placement, specific programs for returned migrants to find employment
Ministry of Public Health and Social Assistance (MSPAS)	6ta Ave 3-45, Zona 11, Guatemala	(502) 2444-7474 consultas@mspas.gob.gt	mspas.gob.gt	Public hospitals and clinics, vaccine information
Ministry of Social Development (MIDES)		info@mides.gob.gt	mides.gob.gt	Offers the Community Dining program that provides food and the Bolsa Social program that provides families in Guatemala City Q250 for food
National Civil Registry (RENAP)	Calzada Roosevelt 13-46, Zona 7	(502) 2416-1900 contactenos@renap.gob.gt	renap.gob.gt	Assistance for returned migrants and free documents upon arrival
National Council of Attention to Migrants of Guatemala (CONAMIGUA)	5a Ave "A" 13-28, Zona 9, Cdad Capital	(502) 2299-5600 conamigua@conamigua.gob.gt	conamigua.gob.gt	Food, clothing, hygiene kits, and other resources for migrants with offices in Guatemala City, Todos Santos Cuchumatán, Hehetenango, San Marco, Coban, Santa Cruz del Quiche, Zacapa, and Peten

Government Programs

Name	Who it helps	What it provides	Where to learn more
CEMUCAF	Young people and adults in underdeveloped areas	Free technical and entrepreneurial skills training	digeex.mineduc.gob.gt/digeex/en/municipal-vocational-and-human-training-centers-program-cemucaf
Community Dining	Individuals and families in affected	Access to food and free,	mides.gob.gt/programas-sociales/comedores

program	by poverty or an emergency situation	nutritious daily food (breakfast and lunch) for children	
Correspondence Education for Adults Program (PEAC)	People who didn't finish school	Accelerated path to completing a primary education	tinyurl.com/PEAC-GT
FOPA VI	Families who want to buy a new home or fix up their current home	Financial support	fopavi.gob.gt
Improving the Socioeconomic Conditions of Women	Women	Training and education to improve their work and support their families	tinyurl.com/Women-GT
Language Learning Center (CALUSAC)	People who want to become fluent in a language other than Spanish	Language classes including English	calusacusac.usac.edu.gt
Life Program	Parents of girls under 14 who became mothers due to sexual violence	Regular payments of Q1,500	mides.gob.gt/programas-sociales/vida
My First House	First-time home buyers	Financial assistance	miprimeracasa.gob.gt
My Golden Years	Senior citizens	Comprehensive daytime and residential care focused on nutrition, health, and social	tinyurl.com/Seniors-GT

		integration	
National Alternative Education Program (PRONEA)	People who never attended/finished school or people missing school transcripts	Free primary and secondary education (both online and self-guided). Allows students to earn certification through proficiency exams based on life experience	tinyurl.com/PRONEA-GT
Quedate	At-risk and returning adolescents	Technical training	munivisitacion.gob.gt/centro-de-formacion-quedate
Return Home	Returned and deported Guatemalans	Help reestablishing life, job fairs, technical training, entrepreneurial training and support	guatemala.gob.gt/plan-retorno-al-hogar
Senior Citizens' Economic Contribution Program	People over 65 who live in extreme poverty	Monthly payments of Q500 to help cover basic needs	mintrabajo.gob.gt/pam
Social Bonus Program	Pregnant women and low-income families with children who meet certain health and education requirements	Regular payments of Q500	mides.gob.gt/programas-sociales/bono

Social Scholarships	Adults, preferably women, living in poverty	Conditional cash transfers toward skills and job training as well as secondary and higher education	tinyurl.com/Becas-GT
Social Stock Program	Low-income families in Guatemala City	Regular payments of Q250 on a debit card that can be used for basic food products at approved stores	mides.gob.gt/programas-sociales/bolsa-social
Young Protagonists Program	Vulnerable teens and young people living in poverty	Free education and support	mides.gob.gt/programas-sociales/jovenes-protagonistas

Non-Profits				
Name	Address	Contact	Website	Description
The Alliance	13 Ave 0-37 Zona 2 de Mixco Colonia La Escudrilla Guatemala	(502) 2509-5555 desarrollo@la-alianza.org.gt	la-alianza.org.gt	Shelter and recovery programs for children and mothers who are survivors of sexual exploitation or trafficking
American Friends Service Committee			afsc.org/crossing-south	<i>Crossing South</i> , detailed online reentry guide
Association Pop No'j	Cdad de 3A Ave 0-80, Cdad de Guatemala 01002, Guatemala	(502) 2251-5716 info@asociacionpopnoj.org	asociacionpopnoj.org	Financial and mental health support for returned migrant children
Brother Pedro's Social Works	6a Calle Oriente No 20, Antigua Guatemala,	(502) 7931-2100 asociacion@obrashermanopedro.org	hermanopedro.org	Medical and mental health care, day care center, rehabilitation,

	Sacatepéquez	org		services available to anyone in a vulnerable situation
Comprehensive Support Center for Women Survivors (CAIMUS)	Call and ask for nearest center location	(502) 2250-0235 (502) 2230-2674 ggm@ggm.org.gt	ggm.org.gt/caimus	Legal help, 24-hour helpline, temporary shelter, psychological support, and social services to survivors of violence
Casa de Colores	4th avenida C 2-61 zona 1 Retalhuleu	(502) 4283-3796 accreu16@gmail.com	facebook.com/casa.de.colores.328434	Human rights advocacy, nutrition, education, and access to food
Casa del Migrante	15 Ave 1, Cdad de Guatemala, Guatemala	(502) 2230-2781 cscalapm@gmail.com	simn-global.org/centros-scalabrinianos	Immediate humanitarian assistance for migrants
Connects You	4ta Ave 15-70 Zona 10, 3ra Calle 4-44 Zona 10, FLACSO, Guatemala	(502) 2333-6891 Info@teconecta.org	facebook.com/teconecta2016	Immediate support upon arrival, job counseling, interview training, free training, document help
Clinics for Victims of Sexual Violence		(502) 2444-7474	mspas.gob.gt	24-hour specialized clinics available in most emergency rooms for survivors of sexual violence, part of MSPAS
Desgua	8 Ave 5-19, Zona 1, Quetzaltenango, Guatemala 09001	DESGUAinfo@desgua.org	desgua.org	Various initiatives for returned migrants, educational and economic opportunities
Fundación Arcoiris/ Rainbow Foundation		(502) 4907-2276 arcoiris_quetzaltenango@hotmail.com	facebook.com/fundacionarcoiris/	Healthcare, financial assistance, advocacy, and community events for members of the LGBTQ+ community
GAX		(502) 5754-6059 grupoapoyogax@gmail.com	gaxong.gt	Youth services and education resources
Guatemalan	15 calle D 7-58	(502) 2294-9217	facebook.com/	Employment and

Association of Returnees	Zona 13 Colonia Aurora I, Cdad de Guatemala	info@arg.com.gt	Retornadosgt	education support for returned migrants
IDSO		(502) 5543-1057 idsoxela@hotmail.com	facebook.com/IDSOAsociacion	Human rights defense
INTECAP			intecap.edu.gt/becasretornados	Vocational training, certification programs, in-person courses
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	Edif Reforma 10, en la Ave Reforma 09-55, Zona 10, Cdad de Guatemala	(502) 2414-7401 iomguatemala@iom.int	nortedecentroamerica.iom.int/es/guatemala	Employment workshops, information about migration and discriminatory practices, humanitarian assistance for migrants, gender equality advocacy, and more
Kajib Kawoq Cuatro Guardianes	7th Ave 6-68 zona 1 Quetzaltenango	(502) 4270-559	facebook.com/cuatroguardianes	Human rights advocacy and health care for indigenous LGBTQ+ individuals
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)		(202) 824-8680 separation@supportkind.org	supportkind.org	Transportation, family reunification, and reintegration support for youth returning to Guatemala and Honduras
Línea 1572		1572		24/7 hotline for women facing abuse or violence
Norwegian Refugee Council Guatemala		(502) 3000-1918 ncam.desplazadosgtm@nrc.no	nrc.no/countries/south-america/guatemala	Legal protection, social inclusion, capacity building, and assistance to internally displaced persons and asylum seekers in Guatemala
OTRANS Trans Queens of the Night Organization	Edif Pan Am, 6a Av 11-43 Z1, 4o Nivel Oficina 401	(502) 2251-0685 infoftans@gmail.com	reinasdelanoche.org.gt	Legal assistance, mental health care, and advocacy for trans people

Parallel Lives		(502) 3080-6259 info@vdsparalelas.org	vdsparalelas.org	Self-help programs
Spouses of Deportees Living in Guatemala			facebook.com/groups/DeporteeSpousesLivinginGuatemala	Online support group for spouses of people deported to Guatemala
Survivors Foundation	12 calle 11-63 Zona 1, Ciudad Guatemala	(502) 2245-3000 sobrevivientes@sobrevivientes.org	sobrevivientes.org	Legal assistance, counseling, job programs, and social support for survivors of domestic and sexual violence
SWISSCONT ACT	18 Ave B 8-94 Zona 15, Vista Hermosa I, Cdad de Guatemala	(502) 2369-8798 gtm.info@swisscontact.org	swisscontact.org/es/paises/guatemala	Can certify education or training from other countries, call center for questions about reintegration and migration
UNHCR CAPMiR		(502) 2277-2650 guagu@unhcr.org	help.unhcr.org/guatemala	Information about rights, services, asylum requests, shelter referrals, medical and psychological support, protection for children, basic supplies, and phone or internet access
Vida Digna Guatemala			vidadignaguatemala.org	Youth resources and family reunification
Violet House	3 Ave 5-72 Zona 1, Ciudad de Guatemala	(502) 2230-5647 (502) 3100-8707 info@omesgt.org	omesgt.org/casa-violeta	Temporary shelter, psychological attention, legal support, and prevention programs for women and girls

Guatemalan Consulates in the US

You can visit or contact a Guatemalan consulate to help you obtain an ID, ensure your rights are protected in prison or detention, help you find contact information for your family members, and help connect you with healthcare and education resources, and more. If you are incarcerated or detained you have a right to speak with your consulate if you so choose. Immigration and police must let your consulate visit or speak with you.

Disclaimer: If you have an asylum claim in the US or you have left the country because the government was unable to protect you, targeted or persecuted you, **do not** contact them for help.

State	City	Address	Contact
Arizona	Phoenix	55 E Thomas Rd Phoenix, AZ 85012	(602) 200-3660 consphoenix@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/consuladogtaz
Arizona	Tucson	100 N Stone Ave, #704 Tucson, AZ 85701	(520) 398-6912 constucson@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsuladoGuatemalaTucson
California	Los Angeles	1975 Riverside Dr Los Angeles, CA 90039	(213) 900-1098 conslosangeles@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/consGUAenLAX
California	San Bernardino	330 N "D" St San Bernardino, CA 92401	(909) 572-8800 conssanbernardino@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGuaSB
California	San Francisco	659 A Merchant St San Francisco, CA 94111	(415) 563-8319 conssanfrancisco@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGTSanFrancisco
Colorado	Denver	1001 S Monaco Pkwy, #300 Denver, CO 80224	(303) 629-9212 consdenver@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/Consquadenver
Florida	Lake Worth	1926 10th Ave N, #104-106 Lake Worth, FL 33461	(561) 660-6223 conslakeworth@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsgtLakeWorth
Florida	Miami	999 Ponce de León Blvd, #100 Coral	(305) 679-9945 consmiami@minex.gob.gt

		Gables, FL 33134	facebook.com/ConsGuateMiami
Georgia	Atlanta	192 Technology Prkwy, #150 Peachtree Corners, GA 30092	(470) 657-2510 consatlanta@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGuatAtlanta
Illinois	Chicago	5559 N Elston Ave, #100 Chicago, IL 60630	(312) 540-0781 conschicago@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGtChicago
Maryland	Rockville	979 Rollins Ave Rockville, MD 20852	(240) 485-5050 consmaryland@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/consmarylandgt
Nebraska	Omaha	1010 N 96th St, #200 Omaha, NE 68114	(531) 910-0230 consomaha@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGTOmaha
Nevada	Las Vegas	3785 E Sunset Rd Las Vegas, NV 89120	(702) 605-5420 consnevada@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGTLasVegas
New York	New York City	276 Park Ave S, Floor 2 New York, NY 10010	(212) 686-3837 consnewyork@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGuateNY
New York	Riverhead, Long Island	1333 E Main St, #1 Riverhead, NY 11901	(631) 405-5010 consriverhead@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/Consriverhead
North Carolina	Raleigh	6050 Six Forks Rd Raleigh, NC 27609	(984) 200-1601 consraleigh@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/consraleighgt
Ohio	Columbus	2105 S Hamilton Rd, #100 Columbus, OH 43232	(614) 762-8119 consohio@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGtOhio
Oklahoma	Oklahoma City	5909 NW Expy, #100 Oklahoma City, OK 73132	(405) 603-6631 consoklahoma@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGtOklahoma
Pennsylvania	Philadelphia	417 N 8th St, #201 Philadelphia, PA 19123	(267) 322-2044 consphiladelphia@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConGtFiladelfia

Rhode Island	Providence	555 Valley St, #61-321 Providence, RI 02908	(401) 270-6345 consrhodeisland@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGuateRI
Tennessee	Nashville	1645 Murfreesboro Pike, M Nashville, TN 37217	(615) 988-8624 consnashville@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGTNashville
Texas	Dallas	4405 N Beltwood Pkwy Farmers Branch, TX 75244	(469) 886-9922 consdallas@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGTDallas
Texas	Del Río	106 Foster Dr Del Río, TX 78840	(830) 422-2201 consdelrio@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/consGUAendelRio
Texas	Houston	6300 Richmond Ave, #103 Houston, TX 77057	(713) 953-9531 conshouston@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsGtHoustonTx
Texas	McAllen	705 S Broadway St McAllen, TX 78501	(956) 429-3413 consmcallen@minex.gob.gt facebook.com/ConsulGuateMcAllen
Washington	Renton	711 Powell Ave SW Renton, WA 98057	(564) 241-1480 consseattle@minex.gob.gt

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