





# MONEY TRANSFERS TO MEXICO

A Manual Examining the Transfer of Settlement Funds from U.S. Advocates to Their Clients in Mexico

Fourth Edition | July 2025



#### INTRODUCTION

Your diligent advocacy has paid off for your Mexican clients, and they have now returned to their home communities. How do you ensure that they receive their unpaid wages, monetary damages, or other funds?

This fourth edition manual is an ongoing collaborative initiative of the Immigrant Justice Clinic at American University Washington College of Law ("the Clinic"), Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. ("CDM"), and Justice in Motion ("JiM"). For two decades, our organizations have been working independently and together to help address legal and logistical barriers to justice that the U.S.-Mexico border represents for both migrants and their advocates. One of the common—but often unanticipated—challenges that we and many U.S. advocates have confronted in our transnational litigation is that the hard work continues even after the legal battle has been won. Following a settlement or award, the transfer of U.S. funds to Mexico-based recipients is not as easy or straightforward as it seems. Unsurprisingly, there is no correct, one-size-fits-all answer for the best way to transfer money to Mexico. What might be easiest for advocates might not work for clients or beneficiaries. Likewise, what works for one client may not work for another.

#### This manual aims to accomplish the following:

- 1. Examine the logistics of delivering settlement funds to a client in Mexico, including considerations in determining which option is the best fit for the situation of your client(s).
- 2. Provide an overview of different options for sending money to clients in Mexico, such as using bank-to-bank transfers, money transfer services, and alternate mechanisms to consider.



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#### 1. Will your client¹ be in the U.S. again soon?

If so, it may be best to wait to deliver funds until your client is in the U.S. As you will see, there are some complications with sending money to Mexico.

#### 2. Does your client have a U.S. bank account?

It doesn't hurt to ask! If your client has lived or worked in the U.S. for a year or more, they may have set up a bank account here. A U.S. bank account is easily accessed from Mexico and will enable a seamless transfer of funds.

#### 3. Does your client have a Mexican bank account?

Many Mexican residents, even those who live in urban areas, do not have a bank account. A bank account is generally the most secure method to receive and store money in Mexico, so advocates should consider recommending that their client open a bank account, particularly for large sums of money.

#### 4. Does your client have a government-issued I.D.?

Most money transfer services require the beneficiary to show a current Mexican federal government-issued identification for cash pickup. Additionally, if your client is considering opening a bank account, it is important that they possess the requisite identification. Arguably the most popular form of I.D. is the *credencial de elector* (or "INE"), the Mexican Federal Voter I.D. The application for a Voter I.D. is free, and the I.D. is a widely accepted form of identification. Another valid form of I.D. is a current passport. However, some banks may request more time or documentation for accounts opened using passports instead of an INE. Be sure to check what types of government-issued I.D. are required by any bank where your client is considering opening an account.

The terms "client" and "beneficiary" will be used interchangeably to refer to the recipient of the funds.

#### 5. Are you sending money to multiple clients?

If you are sending money to several clients, it may be best to choose a money transfer method that offers a flat fee and allows for multiple transfers in one transaction. Small fees for each transaction may add up. Some money transfer services, such as <u>Airwallex</u>, allow for batch transfers to multiple clients.

#### 6. Is this a one-time payment or will there be recurring payments?

While many online platforms offer discounts on your first transfer using the service, the fees may increase with subsequent transfers. Although banks may be less likely to offer discounts on transfer fees, they may provide greater security to clients for whom recurring payments may pose logistical challenges (e.g. communication and transportation) or personal security risks.

#### 7. How much money do you need to send?

For larger amounts, look for options with flat fees rather than a percentage of the total and make sure to check the transaction limits. For smaller amounts, look for options with no transfer fees or fees that are a percentage of the total. Keep in mind that some commercial transfer services like Western Union have relatively low transfer limits, making such services unsuitable for clients receiving larger amounts.

#### II. INTERNATIONAL BANK-TO-BANK TRANSFERS



1. If your client will not be in the U.S. soon and does not have a U.S. bank account, common ways of transferring money include bank-to-bank transfers or money transfer services.

International bank-to-bank transfers may have a longer timeframe than other methods, typically ranging from one to two days, up to a week. There are a few types of fees often incurred through bank-to-bank transfers. Sending bank fees are initial processing charges from your bank. Chase bank charges \$40-\$50, Bank of America typically charges \$45, and Wells Fargo charges \$40. There may also be intermediary fees and receiving bank fees.

Some advocates may wish to not have receiving fees deducted from their client's money, and may want to inquire with the bank about covering all fees upfront. Advocates may also consider including defendant responsibility for covering a portion of the transfer fees as part of a settlement agreement. Additionally, if the transfer involves a currency conversion, banks may charge a fee for the conversion.

For example, an advocate initiating a \$10,000 international bank-to-bank transfer online from a Chase bank account to a Scotiabank account in Mexico can expect a number of fees. First, a \$40 fee applies to international transfers online through Chase bank. If the amount was under \$5,000, an additional \$5 foreign currency conversion fee would apply. In addition, Chase bank sets its own foreign currency exchange rate. If the transfer involves intermediary banks, those fees typically range from \$15 to \$30. Upon receiving the transfer, Scotiabank typically charges \$22.

# 2. For bank-to-bank transfers, it's important to assess the viability and functionality of a Mexican bank account for your client's ability to receive international funds.

As mentioned above, a bank transfer is generally the most secure method to send and receive money, particularly for large sums. Note that not all Mexican banks accept international transfers. Make sure your client confirms that the bank can accept wire transfers from the U.S. It may be helpful to have your client connect you with a branch manager at the bank, so that you can confirm any requirements directly.

If the amount to transfer is fairly small and your client is unlikely to use the account again, it may not be worth

opening an account. The costs associated with opening an account could make it a less viable option. Costs may include the initial deposit, minimum balance requirement, and other fees. Other factors to consider are the administrative, logistical and travel demands on your client's time and resources. You may also consider a bank's location and hours of operation when weighing this option. Calling the bank directly, or having your client connect you with a local contact at the bank, may be the best way to obtain information and assist your client in determining whether a bank account is the right fit. Depending on the location of your client, Justice in Motion Defenders may be able to assist your client with identifying an appropriate bank and with the process of opening an account.

#### 3. What information may your client be required to provide to facilitate a bank-to-bank transfer?

Your client may need to be prepared to provide: the name and address of the client's bank in Mexico, the client's name, address, and account type, the client's account number or IBAN (International Bank Account Number), the client's bank's BIC/SWIFT code (similar to a routing number or a zip code). You may find this code online, or by asking the client's bank. It may be helpful to ask your client to obtain this information in writing from the bank, to ensure accuracy.

#### **III. MONEY TRANSFER SERVICES**

#### 1. Considerations for Evaluating Money Transfer Services

Some of the more popular money transfer platforms may not be viable options for transferring funds to clients in Mexico. Venmo, Zelle, and Cashapp require both the sender and beneficiary to have a U.S. bank account. Venmo also requires both parties to have a U.S. phone number connected to their accounts.

Currency exchange rates are an important factor to consider, as these could cost your client hundreds of dollars. Banks sometimes have more costly exchange rates than other money transfer services.<sup>2</sup> Since exchange rates can fluctuate day by day, it's important to check the current rate at the time of your transfer. Online money transfer services will let you know their exchange rate by the time you submit the transaction, but some are more upfront about it than others.

For methods that don't require a U.S. bank account, <u>Monito</u> compares platforms, including fees, transaction limits, and exchange rates. Many platforms offer discounts on your first money transfer transaction.

Many money transfer services require funds to be sent from a personal account rather than a business account. However, ethical rules governing how attorneys maintain client funds typically prohibit transferring funds from a personal account, thus requiring advocates to send from their firm or organization's client trust account. Therefore, advocates should research state-specific laws governing client trust accounts and prohibited transactions. For example, in Wisconsin, attorneys may initiate wire transfers over the phone from a non-pooled client trust account.<sup>3</sup> Attorneys engaging in wire transactions must take prudent precautions in safeguarding the client's confidential information and verifying the accuracy of the wiring credentials to prevent bad actors from compromising or intercepting the funds.<sup>4</sup>

#### 2. Money Transfer Service Chart

This is not an exhaustive list of service options, nor do our organizations advocate for use of these services over any others. Advocates should research the service prior to initiating the transaction, as fees, terms, and conditions may change after the publication of this Manual.

<sup>2</sup> See Quinn Askeland, 7 Cheapest International Transfers, Transumo (Jan. 20, 2025), https://transumo.com/cheapest-international-money-transfers/.

Timothy J. Pierce, Ethical Dilemma: Wire Transfers and Trust Accounts: What's Permissible?, Wisconsin Bar (Nov. 20, 2019), <a href="https://www.wisbar.org/NewsPublications/InsideTrack/pages/Article.aspx?Volume=11&Issue=20&ArticleID=27340">https://www.wisbar.org/NewsPublications/InsideTrack/pages/Article.aspx?Volume=11&Issue=20&ArticleID=27340</a>

<sup>4</sup> Lewis Brisbois Bisgaard & Smith LLP, *Attorney Liability for Wire Fraud Involving Settlement Payments*, Lewis Brisbois, <a href="https://lewisbris-bois.com/attorney-liability-for-wire-fraud-involving-settlement-payments">https://lewisbris-bois.com/attorney-liability-for-wire-fraud-involving-settlement-payments</a>.

Money Transfer Service	Receiving Bank Account Required	Fee	Transfer Limit	Wait Time	Other Considerations	Sending from Law Firm Account Allowed
Airwallex	Yes	Interbank rate + 0.6%	No limit, but transfers over \$25,000 per month may require more information	A few hours to one business day	No minimum deposit and no balance requirements.	Only offers accounts to registered businesses.
MoneyGram for Cash Pickup	No	\$0 on first transfer, fees vary based on country and amount afterwards	\$9,999	Within minutes	Need a reference number and an I.D. for pick-up.	Yes
MoneyGram Transfer to Bank	Yes	\$0 on first transfer, fees vary based on country and amount afterwards	\$9,999	As little as one hour	N/A	Yes
<u>OFX</u>	Yes	\$0	No limit	1-5 business days	N/A	Yes
Remitly	No	\$1.99 for bank or mobile deposit	\$2,999 per day, up to \$10,000 per month to \$18,000 over 3 months	3-5 business days	Senders can apply for a higher sending limit by providing more documentation	No Using a business
		\$3.99 for cash deposit				debit card is prohibited
Ria	No	\$0 on first transfer, between \$0.90-\$9 afterwards	\$14,999 (if identity is verified)	Under 3 hours if using credit or debit card to send. Up to 4 days if using bank transfer.	N/A	No
Sure Money/ Dinero Seguro	No	\$13.95 for up to \$750 and \$19.95 for > \$750 \$0.00 for bank account or debit card origin	\$1,500 per day	15 mins	Seller must initiate in person	No Using a business debit card is prohibited
Western Union for Cash Pick-Up	No/it depends	\$0.00 for bank account, Google Pay, or debit card origin \$74.99 fee for paying with cash	\$5,000	Minutes	Requires receiver's first and last name	Yes, if using a business bank account. However, use of business debit card is prohibited.
Western Union Transfer to Bank	No/ it depends	\$0.00 for bank account, Google Pay, or debit card origin \$74.99 fee for paying with cash	\$4,999	Same day or instant for the following Banamex, Bancomer, Santander, Azteca, Bancoppel, HSBC and Scotiabank receiving accounts	Requires account number or CLABE, receiver address, city, state, or phone number	Yes, if using a business bank account. However, use of business debit card is prohibited.
Western Union Mobile Wallet	No/it depends	\$0.00 for bank account, Google Pay, or debit card origin \$74.99 fee for paying with cash	\$4,999	Minutes	Requires account number or CLABE, receiver address, city, state, or phone number	Yes, if using a business bank account. However, use of business debit card is prohibited.
Wise		\$7.13 + 0.56% of the converted amount	\$94,999.42	Up to 3 days	Requires 18-digit CLABE	Wise is not able to process payments from client trust accounts, though this may change.
					Cannot send to BanCoppel or Banco Azteca accounts	
Xoom (PayPal)	No	\$0	\$9,819.71	Mins to Hours	N/A	Xoom is only able to process payments from personal accounts, not from accounts designated as business accounts.

#### IV. ALTERNATIVES AND LAST-RESORT OPTIONS

#### 1. Settlement Administrators

In cases with a very large number of clients, for example, a large class-action suit, you may choose to hire a settlement administrator. If you choose to hire a settlement administrator, take care to select a firm that understands the complexity of distributing settlement money to clients living in Mexico. Be sure to decide on the settlement administrator before finalizing the agreement so that the fees are covered by the defendant.

Ask the firm if they have experience working with clients in Mexico, or at least experience sending money to countries where many people do not have bank accounts. Ask for examples and references for counsel who have worked with them. Ask if they have the capacity to communicate with clients in Spanish and/or indigenous languages spoken in Mexico, including willingness to work with interpretation service providers. You may choose to agree to facilitate the communication yourself.

#### 2. Sending a Check

Commonly, clients who receive U.S. checks may have few options other than to sign the checks over to informal check-cashers who take substantial cuts. While mailing a check may seem like a common-sense solution, this method is generally not a good option for Mexico-based clients. First, many Mexican banks will not cash or deposit foreign checks. Those that do generally charge exorbitant fees or have minimum account balance requirements that clients often cannot meet. Therefore, it is important to research options and have a specific plan for cashing a check in advance of shipping it.

Listed below are Mexican banks and their ability to cash or deposit foreign checks. This list is only meant to serve as a starting point. This information may change over time, and some branches may have different practices. Advocates should do their own research to confirm availability of the U.S. check cashing option, and any applicable requirements and fees.

#### MEXICAN BANKS AND ABILITY TO CASH FOREIGN CHECKS

Banamex	Can accept deposit of U.S. checks. You do not need to open any account; there's no maximum amount and no commission.
Banco Azteca	Does not accept U.S. checks.
BBVA	You can only deposit a U.S. check if you have a U.S. dollar account, which is only available in cities by the border. No deposit limit nor commission.
HSBC	Does not accept U.S. checks.
Santander	You can deposit a U.S. check. You would need to open one of the qualifying accounts, and wait at least 6 months to request the deposit at the branch. This process might take 2-3 months for authorization. There's no limit on the deposit, and the commission varies.
Scotiabank	You would need a U.S. dollar account to be able to deposit a U.S. check.

Further, the reliability of the Mexican mail system can be unpredictable in certain contexts. For example, in rural or informally-settled areas, clients may have informal or unregistered private addresses, which are sometimes visible on an address line as "localidad" (sometimes abbreviated to "loc") and which have a high "return to sender" rate. Generally, clients have little recourse if international mail sent through standard means is intercepted, delayed beyond the check's validity period, or fails to arrive at all.

If you do choose to mail a check, take care to use the most secure method possible. Services like FedEx, DHL, and UPS offer secure international shipping. When using these, it is important to ensure that your client is aware of any requirements upon pickup, such as whether they must sign for the delivery, travel to a designated pick up location within a certain timeframe, or present a valid form of a specific I.D. You may also take precautions such as wrapping the check in other layers of paper inside the envelope.







## 3. Send the money to a trusted family member of your client who resides in the U.S.

You will want to get your client's informed, written consent to this arrangement to prevent potential confusion or disputes. You may consider having your client sign a limited power of attorney — drafted for use in the United States but executed in Mexico — authorizing the other party to deposit the check into a U.S. bank account and then wire the funds to the client. State laws vary in requirements for limited powers of attorney, so it is important to confirm the relevant state law before proceeding. One option is to have an attorney from Mexico notarize the power of attorney, and then request an apostille from the U.S. Embassy to help validate the notary and increase chances of acceptance by U.S. banks. Be sure to check your local bar rules for ethical considerations before choosing this option.

#### 4. Power of Attorney to Advocate

It is also possible for the client to authorize their attorney to open a bank account in the U.S. under the client's name and then deposit the check into the U.S. account. A client could then access the money upon return to the U.S. or wire the funds to an account in Mexico. If considering this option, be sure to review your state ethics rules and consider whether this is appropriate in your state.

#### 5. Sending an ATM Debit Card

Another alternative to consider is sending the funds via an ATM debit card to your client. VISA, MasterCard, American Express, and Discover are the predominant and most widely accepted card vendors in Mexico. While less common, some ATMs may accept Diners Club Cash.<sup>5</sup> The process involves setting a Personal Identification Number ("PIN"), sharing the PIN with the client, and physically getting the ATM debit card to your client so they can withdraw funds.

It can be helpful to discuss with your client what ATMs are accessible to them and research what card vendors are in-network at the ATM your client will use. It is also important to research any limits at the ATM, for example: ATMs may have daily withdrawal limits of 6,000 to 9,000 pesos.<sup>6</sup>

Be sure to research any fees that will apply when your client accesses the debit card at an ATM. The ATM itself will often deduct its charged fee for the transaction from the withdrawal amount.<sup>7</sup> There will also be a foreign exchange charge and currency exchange rate charge assessed to the transaction. The currency exchange rate is calculated based on the foreign exchange rate that day and may amount to 2-5% of the transaction's value.<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Using Your Debit & Credit Cards in Mexico, Mexperience, <a href="https://www.mexperience.com/using-your-debit-credit-cards-in-mexico/">https://www.mexperience.com/using-your-debit-credit-cards-in-mexico/</a> (last visited March 23, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> N26. "Using Your Card in Mexico: The Complete Guide." N26, https://n26.com/en-eu/using-card-in-mexico.

<sup>7</sup> *Id.* 

<sup>8</sup> *Id.* 

Out-of-network ATMs may charge additional fees. For considerations in shipping a debit card to Mexico, see subsection 2, "Sending a Check to Mexico."

#### V. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### 1. Client Security

It is always advisable to discuss security considerations with your client and to choose a method that is not only transactionally secure but also minimizes personal risk to your client. For instance, picking up cash from a Western Union office and then traveling long distances may increase someone's vulnerability to theft or assault. In some cases, banks may have withdrawal limits in place, and some may offer secure accompaniment to clients withdrawing substantial sums. Involving third parties, such as friends, family members, or other community contacts as interpreters or intermediaries, may likewise generate unwanted attention or risks. In other cases, checks mailed to a personal address could pose a security risk to some clients if the package or delivery method is eye-catching or may be uncommon or unusual, particularly if their mail or their community's mail is being monitored. There is no single best solution for everyone, so it is important to review multiple options.

#### 2. Rules of Professional Conduct

ABA Model Rule of Professional Conduct 1.15 lays out the responsibilities of an attorney who is safeguarding client funds. The attorney's responsibilities include: keeping the funds in a safe account separate from the attorney's own property and marking the property as belonging to the client; maintaining a complete record of account funds for a certain number of years after the end of representation; promptly notifying clients or third persons with an interest in the funds upon receipt; promptly delivering funds to clients or third persons; refraining from distribution of disputed funds; and keeping funds in the state where the lawyer's office is situated unless the client consents to keep money elsewhere. Review your state bar rules to determine whether a particular course of action complies with local rules.

#### 3. U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Cases

Some clients receive money from cases resolved administratively or litigated by the DOL. The agency's practice in sending funds to workers in Mexico can vary depending on the region. Some regions regularly send money via Western Union or international bank-to-bank transfers. Advocates should contact the corresponding district office and ask for the contact at the regional office in charge of distributions. Alternatively, advocates can try contacting the regional office directly to find out who is in charge of distributions.

#### 4. Applicable Tax Law

#### U.S. Tax Law

Non-resident immigrants, depending on their income level and length of time in the U.S., may need to file taxes on funds received through a legal settlement or award, even if they have left the country. H-2A visa-holders also need to file a tax return even though they are exempt from federal taxes. For more information on filing requirements, see the most recent IRS tax guide for non-citizens. In general, back pay or lost wages are considered taxable income. If the client is receiving settlement funds subject to income tax, the employer will generally make these withholdings before paying the settlement. Advocates should encourage their clients to consult with an accountant or other professional tax advisor regarding their tax filing obligations.

Some U.S. advocates are wary of having settlement funds pass through their client trust account if they are not certain the defendant withheld all appropriate deductions to comply with U.S. tax law, because once the funds

<sup>9</sup> Avoiding Checking Account Fees Tool, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, <a href="https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb\_yourmoney-your-goals-avoid-checking-fees-tool-2018-11.pdf">https://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/documents/cfpb\_yourmoney-your-goals-avoid-checking-fees-tool-2018-11.pdf</a>.

pass through a client trust account, the advocate's firm or legal services organization may be held liable for any non-compliance. If this is a concern, it may be worthwhile, in settlement negotiations, to have the defendant agree to transfer the funds directly to your client either via bank-to-bank transfer or money transfer service.

#### Mexican Tax Law

In Mexico, residents are taxed on income earned anywhere in the world, including settlement payments for punitive and compensatory damages, as stipulated in Article 1 of the Ley de Impuesto Sobre la Renta (LISR). However, Article 24 of the U.S.-Mexico Tax Treaty offers mechanisms to prevent double taxation, allowing taxpayers to claim credits for taxes paid in the other country. Thus, your client(s) may need to report their settlement money to Mexican authorities. See the Mexican Tax Administration Service's website or consult with a Mexican tax law expert for more information on how receiving settlement money may affect your client.

#### 5. Anti-Money Laundering Procedures

Advocates should be aware that money transfer services are required to track money sent from the U.S. to foreign countries, and that extra procedures are in place to track transfers over \$10,000. Provisions of the Patriot Act and the Dodd-Frank Act place reporting and record-keeping obligations on banks and remittance providers to prevent money laundering. The Bank Secrecy Act also requires banks and other money transfer organizations to file Suspicious Activity Reports (SAR) when a transaction over \$2,000 seems suspicious. A money-laundering prevention guide from Financial Crimes Enforcement Network explains when transactions are flagged as being suspicious, such as when there are spelling alterations in the customer's name, or when money is sent just under the threshold amount over several days.

Advocates may wonder whether these protections raise concerns for sending settlement payments of amounts greater than \$10,000. It is important to note that outside of the additional scrutiny and questions that transactions over \$10,000 generate, these protections likely will not have a direct impact on transfers over \$10,000.

#### 6. Communication Complications

When clients return to Mexico, maintaining communication can be a challenge. Clients may face barriers to calling internationally, especially U.S. toll-free numbers, which are not accessible out-of-country. They may also face connectivity issues, particularly if they live in rural areas. They may also face financial limitations to maintaining a phone line or purchasing data, especially if they recently became unemployed or have incurred substantial travel expenses.

Whenever – and as early as – possible, try and obtain multiple forms of contact information for your client before they return to Mexico, including trusted friends and family members, email addresses, even social media accounts. Organizations like CDM (info@cdmigrante.org) and Justice in Motion (legalaction@justiceinmotion.org) have been successful in assisting U.S. advocates in locating clients for the purposes of case follow-up, including for the purposes of money transfers. Local or federal authorities may also be a resource, although they should be approached with caution following thorough security analysis.

#### **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

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The Immigrant Justice Clinic (IJC) provides representation on a broad range of cases and projects involving individual immigrants and migrants, and their communities, both in the D.C. metropolitan area and overseas. Student attorneys in the IJC regularly appear in Immigration Court, and may also appear before federal district court, the courts of Maryland and D.C., and before federal and state agencies. Since migration has a transnational dimension, the IJC occasionally advocates before regional and international bodies. The matters handled by the IJC allow students to develop core lawyering skills, such as interviewing, counseling, negotiation, and trial advocacy, while cultivating complementary skills in the areas of policy and legislative advocacy, community organizing, and working with the media.

#### CENTRO DE LOS DERECHOS DEL MIGRANTE, INC.

Centro de los Derechos del Migrante, Inc. (Center for Migrant Rights or CDM) is a migrant workers' rights organization with offices in Mexico and the United States. Since 2005, CDM has partnered with migrant workers to build worker power, advocate for fair labor migration policies and remove borders as barriers to justice for migrant workers who experience workplace violations, exploitation and abuse during recruitment in Mexico and while living and working in the United States. CDM envisions a world where migrant workers' rights are respected and where laws and policies reflect their voices. CDM provides on-the-ground campaign and litigation support to lawyers, nonprofit organizations, and worker groups when clients or members return to Mexico. In 2023, CDM received the Presidential Award for Extraordinary Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Persons for its outstanding record of assisting thousands of migrant workers to defend their rights and its years of tireless advocacy and organizing to advance a more just and humane migration process free of forced labor and other forms of exploitation.

#### JUSTICE IN MOTION

Justice in Motion (JiM) builds collaborative partnerships connecting migrants, legal advocates, and human rights defenders to make justice possible across borders. Through a robust and locally-led Defender Network, targeted policy advocacy, and strategic legal action, we work steadfastly to uphold the rights of migrants — ensuring portable justice — no matter where they go. Since 2005, JiM has helped over 20,000 migrants, engaged more than 350 U.S. lawyers, and grown the Defender Network to include more than 60 Defender entities across Mexico and Central America. As of early 2025, the JiM Defender Network covers 15 states in México (Baja California, Campeche (and the Yucatan Peninsula), Chiapas, Chihuahua, Coahuila, Guanajuato, Guerrero, Hidalgo, Michoacán, Oaxaca, San Luis Potosí, Puebla, Tabasco, Tlaxcala, and Veracruz) as well as Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador and Nicaragua, and continues to grow.

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