Panama tops new ranking of 11 active investment migration programs across Latin America

Global Citizen Solutions analyzes Latin America’s 11 residency programs with Panama's investor visa ranking first

LONDON , UNITED KINGDOM, August 26, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Sub1: Global Citizen Solutions analyzes Latin America’s 11 active residency programs

Sub2: North American nationals overtake Colombians as the largest applicant group for Panama's investor visa, ranked 1st in comparative analysis
Sub4: Foreign direct investment into the region reached $194 billion in 2025

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> *Patricia Casaburi, Founder and CEO, Global Citizen Solutions*

London - August 24th, 2026 - Global Citizen Solutions (“GCS”), a leading global residency and citizenship planning advisory firm, released new research and a ranking entitled Investment Migration Programs in Latin America: a comparative analysis. The briefing assesses eleven active residency programs across the region and ranks each on four measures: processing speed, tax attractiveness, investment flexibility, and presence freedom. Panama leads the combined ranking with a score of 84.4, followed by Paraguay at 80.1 and the Dominican Republic at 77.7, ahead of Costa Rica, Ecuador, Uruguay, Brazil, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, and Chile.

Panama is the most consistently competitive across all four measures, Paraguay offers the strongest value for money, Costa Rica trades speed for flexibility, Colombia is fastest on paper but least forgiving on presence, Chile leads on quality of life while ranking last as a program, and Mexico, the region's second-largest economy, sits mid-table despite drawing the second-largest share of regional investment.

North America becomes Panama's top source of investor demand

Panama's Qualified Investor approvals rose 75% in 2024, from 187 to 327, while Self-Solvency Real Estate approvals more than doubled, from 63 to 133. The program now approves roughly 25 qualified investor applications a month against a target of 150, a sixfold increase, on the strength of a shift in its applicant base: North American nationals have overtaken Colombians as the largest single group. Panama leads the combined program ranking, ranking first or second across all four measures assessed, with the region's widest choice of qualifying assets, from real estate and listed securities to bank deposits and forestry, and no mandatory minimum stay.

Combined Score by Program

Rank	Country	Score
1	**Panama**	84.4
2	Paraguay	80.1
3	Dominican Republic	77.7
4	Costa Rica	76.0
5	Ecuador	75.5
6	Uruguay	69.5
7	Brazil	67.1
8	Colombia	66.9
9	Mexico	65.7
10	Peru	65.6
11	Chile	60.1

Ranking of 11 active residency programs in Latin America

A region drawing global capital with US capital leading institutional flows into the region

The shift in investor visa demand tracks a larger capital story. Foreign direct investment into Latin America and the Caribbean reached $194.233 billion in 2025, up 1.7% year-on-year, with Brazil and Mexico together absorbing 62% of inflows. Amazon, Microsoft, and Google have collectively committed roughly $23 billion to the region as part of a global AI infrastructure build-out in which the four largest US technology firms are expected to deploy approximately $700 billion over the coming years. Microsoft alone has committed $2.7 billion to Brazilian cloud and AI infrastructure, $3.3 billion to its Chile data center region, and $1.3 billion to Mexico through 2027. Cross-border M&A activity is following the same trajectory, with Mexico's deal value rising 86% year-on-year to roughly $32.5 billion in 2025, driven primarily by US and European acquirers.

Markets are pricing in the shift

The MSCI EM Latin America index returned 56% in 2025 and still trades at a 43% discount to global equities, a gap drawn in part to rising demand for the region's AI-related commodities. Chile, Argentina, and Bolivia's "lithium triangle" holds roughly 50% of the world's identified lithium resources, while Chile, Peru, and Mexico supply close to 40% of global copper, both critical inputs to the data-center and energy-transition buildout underpinning the AI economy. Latin America's high-net-worth population saw its collective wealth grow 5.1% in 2025, with Brazil (+6.0%) and Mexico (+5.4%) both outperforming the regional average.

Panama: the most balanced program in the region

Panama's advantage lies in the absence of a weakness rather than a single standout feature. It ranks first or second across all four measures, offering the region's widest choice of qualifying assets: real estate from $300,000, listed securities from $500,000, bank deposits from $750,000, or forestry investment from $100,000 to $800,000, with no mandatory minimum stay. Approval volumes hit records in 2024: Qualified Investor approvals rose 75%, from 187 to 327, and Self-Solvency Real Estate approvals more than doubled. Panama now approves roughly 25 qualified investor applications a month and is targeting 150, with North American nationals having overtaken Colombians as its largest applicant group.

Price is a weak signal of program quality
Across the eleven programs, GCS's analysis finds that cost bears little relationship to performance. Ecuador, at a $48,200 investment threshold, ranks fifth overall, and Paraguay, at $70,000, ranks second. Uruguay, whose $2 million threshold is more than forty times Ecuador's, finishes sixth.

A region drawing capital as Europe retrenches
That momentum is compounded by retrenchment elsewhere: Spain ended its golden visa program in April 2025, Portugal removed its real estate route and lengthened naturalization timelines under a law taking effect in May 2026, and Greece's tripled investment threshold in prime areas has been followed by a 24% fall in foreign property acquisitions under its program. For North American investors, Latin America's combination of accelerating capital inflows and a widening menu of residency options positions the region as a growing alternative to a European market that is steadily closing off.

"Latin America is still largely underestimated with programs that have real potential, and passports quietly offering some of the best mobility in the world. They complement Europe's residence programs and the Caribbean's citizenship offerings, while competing on cost, speed, naturalization timelines and access to a wider regional mobility space."
- Patricia Casaburi, Founder and CEO, Global Citizen Solutions

About Global Citizen Solutions
Global Citizen Solutions is a leading global residency and citizenship planning advisory firm, helping high-net-worth clients and their families secure greater control over where they can live, travel, do business, and operate across jurisdictions, globally.

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