

# Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

## Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Bolivia

### Introduction

Bolivia's pro bono tradition is relatively nascent compared to other countries, but it is gradually gaining traction. Historically, access to legal services in Bolivia has been limited, particularly for marginalised and low-income communities. However, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of pro bono legal work in bridging this gap. Legal professionals and private law firms in Bolivia are increasingly engaging in pro bono activities to provide free legal assistance to those in need, often focusing on women, children, education, health, human rights, social justice, and community development issues. This emerging pro bono culture is supported by various legal organisations and initiatives aimed at promoting and institutionalising pro bono practices within the Bolivian legal community.

### At a glance

Minimum pro bono hours requirement for lawyers?	Specific pro bono licence required?	May foreign lawyers practice pro bono?	Insurance required for law firm pro bono?	Insurance required for in-house pro bono?	Rules to limit advertising pro bono work?	Does pro bono work count to CLE credit?	Limitations for in-house lawyers to do pro bono?
No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No	No

### The landscape

Professional regulation	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of legal services, including any licensing required to provide legal services. Please highlight any differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel.</li> </ol>	<p><i>La Ley del Ejercicio de la Abogacía</i>– Ley no. 387 (the Lawyers Act) of 2013 regulates the rights and duties of lawyers. It also confirms that the compensation of a lawyer will be announced (via the public media) by the Ministry of Justice every two years.<sup>1</sup></p> <p><i>Reglamento a la Ley del Ejercicio de la Abogacía Decreto Supremo no. 1760</i>, dated 9 October 2013 (the Lawyers Act Regulations), regulates the Lawyers Act.</p> <p>Supreme Decree No. 3463, dated 18 January 2018 (the Supreme Decree 3463), guarantees assistance in the technical, free, and specialised defence of girls, boys, and adolescents who are victims of crimes of violence, within the</p>

<sup>1</sup> See [https://www.icacruz.com/files/ley\\_387.pdf](https://www.icacruz.com/files/ley_387.pdf) (in Spanish; no English version currently available) (last visited on 10 December 2024).

	<p>framework of the best interests of the child, in jurisdictional and non-jurisdictional areas.</p> <p>A lawyer in Bolivia is required to register with the Ministry of Justice in order to practise law. Candidates must provide evidence of their graduation from law school and a certificate of good conduct. This qualification route is applicable to barristers, solicitors, and in-house counsel.</p> <p>Foreign lawyers who want to practice law in Bolivia are required to obtain an official approval of their professional degree.</p> <p>The same laws and rules set out above would be applicable for lawyers working as in-house counsel in Bolivia.</p>
<b>Regulatory landscape for pro bono</b>	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>There are no specific rules or requirements placed on lawyers in Bolivia when undertaking pro bono legal work.</p> <p>Article 11 of the Lawyers Act states that lawyers in Bolivia may provide free assistance to people of limited economic resources.</p> <p>The Ministry of Justice sends lists of lawyers registered in the last year to the Judicial Court in order to appoint lawyers ex officio (i.e., public defenders appointed by the Departmental Courts of Justice) to provide judicial assistance in accordance with Law No. 025 of the Judicial Authority. Lawyers who work as employees in a company, law firms, legal entities, or public institutions (i.e., who are subject to binding employment agreements) are compulsorily exempt from this obligation. Lawyers who work independently (for example, on a freelance basis) are not exempt from this obligation.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Bolivia do not require a licence to provide pro bono legal services (beyond the usual local qualification to practice law). Furthermore, Art. 3 of Supreme Decree No. 3463, dated 18 January 2018, states that in order to provide technical, free, and specialised defence assistance to girls, boys, and adolescents who are victims of crimes of violence, interested professionals must register in the Registry of Lawyers for the Technical, Free and Specialised</p>

	Defence of Girls, Boys and Adolescent Victims of Crimes of Violence. The Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency promotes the technical-legal training and specialisation of legal professionals under a human rights approach for children and adolescents, plurality, and the principle of the best interests of the child.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	There are no particular rules or requirements placed on foreign lawyers based in Bolivia to provide pro bono legal services.
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	Lawyers are not required to work a minimum number of pro bono hours in Bolivia.
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	Aspiring lawyers are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services in order to become licensed lawyers.
7. Aside from mandatory targets (if any), are there aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers set by the local bar association, regulatory body or other body?	<p>The Pro Bono Network of the Americas was formed in 2011 as an informal collaborative mechanism between lawyers, NGOs, pro bono initiatives, and other actors in the pro bono field across the Americas to strengthen access to justice, promote respect for human rights, and uphold the rule of law and democracy.<sup>2</sup></p> <p>More than a decade ago, the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice (the Vance Center) and several partners in Latin America launched a campaign called the Pro Bono Declaration of the Americas (PBDA)<sup>3</sup>. This short statement commits signatory law firms and other legal organisations to undertake annually an average of at least 20 hours of pro bono work for each lawyer working there. Today, the declaration has more than 570 signatories, including Bolivian firms, spanning 21 countries and representing more than 15,000 lawyers committing to a total of at least 300,000 hours of pro bono work each year.<sup>4</sup></p>
8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for	Lawyers in Bolivia do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.

<sup>2</sup> See <https://www.vancecenter.org/our-networks/pro-bono-network-of-the-americas/> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.vancecenter.org/our-networks/pro-bono-network-of-the-americas/#:~:text=PBDA,text%20of%20the%20agreement%20below.> (last viewed on 27 January 2026).

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

pro bono hours worked?	
<b>Insurance and advertising</b>	
<p>9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers?</p> <p>If insurance is required, can lawyers meet the requirement by working under the cover of another pro bono provider, e.g. in partnership with a private law firm or organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Bolivia do not require professional indemnity legal insurance coverage for any pro bono legal services that they provide. The requirement does not differ for in-house lawyers.</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>There are no rules that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients in Bolivia.</p>
<b>Pro bono practice and culture</b>	
<p>11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?</p>	<p>The main areas of law that require pro bono legal services are those that are tailored to increasing access to justice for under-represented Bolivian citizens on low incomes. The substantive areas of law and the relevant client populations may differ, but each programme shares the important goal of placing clients in need with pro bono lawyers who are willing to represent them for no fee or a reduced fee.</p> <p>The major unmet legal needs in Bolivia are related to protecting the civil rights, civil liberties, or public rights of the elderly, women and children, land or property rights, education, health, environmental law, and labour law (including unfair dismissal, workplace discrimination, and labour rights).</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>Bolivia currently lacks a well-developed system of, and coordinated approach to, pro bono legal work. The delivery of pro bono legal services has increased in recent years in both the private and public sectors.</p> <p>Private lawyers in Bolivia usually cooperate with pro bono organisations to engage in pro bono legal work. In Bolivia, there exists the Fundación Pro Bono Bolivia (Pro Bono Bolivia Foundation).</p>

Furthermore, some international law firms have established their own pro bono practices.

Please see above the response to Section (b)(6) for a discussion on the Vance Center. Despite these developments, pro bono programmes in private Bolivian law firms still require further development, even though developments have been greatly achieved.

There are a limited number of non-governmental organisations involved in pro bono activity in Bolivia (see below for further details).

There are currently no Bolivian Bar Association Pro Bono Programmes.

The following are a few public or private initiatives that promote pro bono legal services:

- The Multinational Public Defender Service is a governmental entity and legal aid institution.
- The Law School of the San Pablo Bolivian Catholic University has the “UCB San Pablo Legal Clinic”, which provides legal advice and sponsorship in matters related to: family, civil, labour, and children and adolescents.<sup>5</sup>
- The Servicios de Justicia del Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia, which are an operational arm of the Ministry of Justice and Institutional Transparency, and which depend on the Vice Ministry of Justice and Fundamental Rights, both of which are part of the access to justice policy for people with limited resources and other vulnerable sectors.
- The Servicios de Justicia are: (i) Sistema Plurinacional de Justicia (Sijplu), established to provide legal assistance throughout Bolivia in cases of gender-based violence and conflicts in civil, family, and criminal matters; and (ii) Sistema de Defensa Pública Plurinacional (Sepdep), formed to serve exclusively those accused of criminal offences.

These services have four sub-services as listed below:

- **Legal guidance:** Provide information about rights and obligations in order to resolve

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<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.lawschool.cornell.edu/spotlights/First-Bolivian-Legal-Clinic.cfm> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

legal problems.

- **Legal sponsorship:** Assign lawyers at no cost to low-income populations facing legal problems.
- **Psychological care:** Provide services from specialists in the area, especially for victims of violence.
- **Extrajudicial conciliation:** Provide these services to resolve conflicts through the mediation of a trained conciliator.
- Servicios Legales Integrales Municipales (Slims), an entity dependent of the Municipal Government of La Paz, provides psychological and legal assistance to women and men who have experienced violence, whether physical or psychological, at no cost.
- The City of La Paz's Universidad Mayor de San Andrés offers free conciliation, guidance, and legal advice services, whereby it has provided a mobile office that successfully reaches provinces of the Department of La Paz. The initiative aims to benefit populations that do not typically have access to such services and are in need of legal advice, especially rural individuals with limited resources who are void of opportunities to reach a lawyer.
- UMSS Oficina Jurídica Popular de la Universidad Mayor de San Simón provides free services in criminal, family, civil, labour, agrarian, and administrative law to people with limited resources.
- Oficina Jurídica Popular de la Universidad, Univalle, offers free legal advice and guidance on civil, family, and labour matters.
- Oficina Jurídica para la Mujer exclusively handles cases of women in situations of extreme violence who lack protection and subsequent resources.

13. Are there any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or artificial intelligence is being used to enable access to pro bono or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters?

In Bolivia, the use of innovative technology and AI in the legal field, particularly for pro bono legal work, is still developing compared to more developed legal markets. However, there are some noteworthy trends and initiatives that reflect a growing interest in leveraging technology to enhance access to justice:

- **Legal Aid Platforms:** Some organisations and startups are exploring the development of online platforms to connect individuals in need of legal assistance with pro bono lawyers. These platforms aim to streamline the process of finding legal help and make it more accessible to underserved communities. For example, Julia is an AI-style legal assistant platform that helps Bolivians understand legal issues and connects them with verified lawyers. Users can ask legal questions for free and receive guidance, and then choose to engage a lawyer if they want further help.<sup>6</sup>
- **Digital Legal Resources:** Efforts are being made to digitise legal resources and make them available online, which can be particularly beneficial for pro bono lawyers who need access to up-to-date legal information and precedents. For example, Microjustice Bolivia addresses people's basic legal needs by providing accessible and affordable standardized legal services through a Digital Legal Aid Platform. This innovative platform simplifies complex legal procedures, making justice accessible to marginalized communities.<sup>7</sup>
- **Mobile Technology:** Given the widespread use of mobile phones in Bolivia, there is potential for mobile applications to provide legal information and resources to individuals in remote or underserved areas, helping them understand their rights and access legal assistance.
- **Virtual Legal Clinics:** The concept of virtual legal clinics, where lawyers provide pro bono services remotely via video conferencing or other digital means, is gaining traction as a way to reach clients who may not be able to travel to urban centers for legal help.

<sup>6</sup> [https://julia.lat/?utm\\_](https://julia.lat/?utm_) (Last viewed on 27 January 2027).

<sup>7</sup> <https://microjustice.org/microjustice-bolivia/> (last viewed on 27 January 2026).

	<p>While these initiatives have been well resourced, the innovative integration of AI and advanced technology in pro bono legal work in Bolivia has greatly increased more recently. Continued investment in technology infrastructure and legal tech innovation will be crucial to expanding these efforts and improving access to justice.</p>
<p><b>Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts</b></p>	
<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Currently, in Bolivia, there is no central pro bono organisation or clearinghouse that serves as a central body to (i) co-ordinate pro-bono activities nationally or (ii) assign pro bono matters to firms who are interested in such work (like the Comisión Pro Bono in Argentina or the ProVene in Venezuela).</p> <p>According to the Vance Survey 2017 (as referenced in the introduction), Bolivia was one of several countries in Latin America that was in the process of setting up a clearing house for the first time. A clearing house is a form of a matchmaking service for potential pro bono clients and pro bono lawyers. It assists clients in identifying their specific legal needs and connects them (through its network) with pro bono lawyers who have the relevant skill sets. However, the Vance Survey 2017 further reports that the Bolivian clearing house submitted all the paperwork to the government around two years ago (assumed to be around 2015).</p> <p>Since then, the government dissolved the ministry in charge of processing the application, and a different ministry is now dealing with the process.<sup>8</sup> There do not appear to be any further updates on the Bolivia clearinghouse in the Vance Survey 2024.<sup>9</sup></p> <p>AsyLex Legal Advisory lists organisations in Bolivia that provide legal assistance and others that assist refugees.<sup>10</sup></p>
<p>15. Is there any public or private organization with which a local or foreign lawyer can register to be made aware of pro bono opportunities?</p>	<p>There are some public or private organisations in Bolivia with which a local or foreign lawyers can register in order to be made aware of pro bono</p>

<sup>8</sup> See The Latin Lawyer and the Vance Center Pro Bono Survey 2017, p. 16, 17, [https://www.vancecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Latin\\_Lawyer\\_Survey\\_2017-compressed.pdf](https://www.vancecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/Latin_Lawyer_Survey_2017-compressed.pdf) (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>9</sup> See <https://latinlawyer.com/survey/pro-bono/2024/article/pro-bono-jurisdictional-overview-of-the-results> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>10</sup> <https://rightsindex.org/legal-assistance-by-country/bolivia-legal-assistance/> (Last viewed on 27 January 2026).

	<p>opportunities, such as Fundación Pro Bono Bolivia.</p> <p>Useful information on pro bono opportunities in Bolivia can be found in the following links amongst others (the majority are in the Spanish language):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Defender Service<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• The Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• The <i>Centro de Estudios Jurídicos e Investigación Social</i><sup>13</sup></li> <li>• <i>Oficina Jurídica Para La Mujer</i><sup>14</sup></li> <li>• <i>Red Pro Bono Internacional</i><sup>15</sup></li> <li>• Fundación Pro Bono Bolivia<sup>16</sup> and RPA – Unique Lawyer Registry, aliada de la Red Pro Bono de las Américas.</li> <li>• Ministerio de Justicia- Bolivia. Servicios de Justicia Bolivia. Registro Unico de Abogados<sup>17</sup></li> <li>• UMSA Consultorio de Asesoría Jurídica<sup>18</sup></li> <li>• Clínica Jurídica Universidad Católica Boliviana San Pablo<sup>19</sup></li> </ul>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>There are no specific awards, lists, or rankings related to pro bono work in Bolivia. However, the Pro Bono Declaration of the Americas defines legal pro bono and sets forth a commitment of 50 annual pro bono hours per lawyer at signatory law firms. There are currently more than 560 signatories to the Declaration throughout the Americas, including firms in Bolivia.<sup>20</sup></p> <p>In addition, the Pro Bono Network of the Americas is a regional alliance of 18 organisations from 15 countries that arises from the joint initiative of various pro bono organisations that share roots, purposes, and objectives related to</p>

<sup>11</sup> See <http://www.defensoria.gob.bo/> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>12</sup> See <http://www.vancecenter.org/vancecenter/> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>13</sup> See <http://cejis.org/> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>14</sup> See <http://www.ojmbolivia.org> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>15</sup> See <https://www.redprobono.org/> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>16</sup> <https://fundacion-pro-bono-bolivia.mailchimpsites.com/> (Last viewed on 27 January 2026).

<sup>17</sup> See <https://rpa.justicia.gob.bo/#/inicio> / <https://www.conciliacionbolivia.org/serviciosdejusticiabolivia>. (Last viewed on 27 January 2026).

<sup>18</sup> See <https://umsa.bo> (last viewed on 27 January 2026).

<sup>19</sup> See <https://lpz.ucb.edu.bo/clinica-juridica/> (Last viewed on 26 January 2026).

<sup>20</sup> See <https://www.vancecenter.org/initiatives/pro-bono-promotion/> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

legal pro bono work. The Network seeks to strengthen and promote pro bono practice in the Americas as a contribution from the legal profession, through the active and committed participation of its members, for the improvement of access to justice and the defence of the public interest. The Network works in 15 countries, including Bolivia,<sup>21</sup> through Fundación Probono Bolivia<sup>22</sup>.

## Acknowledgements

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## Learn more

[Navigate the full Global Pro Bono Guide](#) to explore the global landscape and pro bono practices and opportunities across 100+ jurisdictions.

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<sup>21</sup> See <https://www.globalnonprofitsguide.org/find-a-lawyer/the-pro-bono-network-of-the-americas> (last visited on 11 December 2024).

<sup>22</sup> See <https://fundacion-pro-bono-bolivia.mailchimpsites.com/miembros> (Last viewed on 27 January 2026).