

# Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

## Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Colombia

### Introduction

The commitment to the provision of pro bono legal services in Colombia has gained significant momentum in the last decade. This is largely due to the country's leading clearinghouse on pro bono matters, *Fundación Pro Bono Colombia*, which was founded in 2008. The clearing house increased the number of cases it handled annually from just 21 in 2009 to 950 by 2021.<sup>1</sup> Other important actors include law firms, NGOs, and universities via their network of *consultorios jurídicos* (legal clinics). Whilst progress has been made, there is still a lot of work left to be done. Indeed, a study conducted in 2021 by various governmental Colombian organisations noted that 80.2% of legal needs are still not being met.<sup>2</sup> Nonetheless, Colombia is currently the country with the most signatories in the Pro Bono Declaration of the Americas (PBDA), which demonstrates the jurisdiction's commitment to pro bono legal services.

### 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>In order to provide legal services in Colombia, one must hold a law degree from a licensed Colombian university and be registered with the <i>Consejo Superior de la Judicatura</i>. Following the implementation of Law 1905 of 2018, certification of passing the State Exam is also required.<sup>3</sup></p> <p>Whilst there is no official lawyer's bar association in Colombia, lawyers are regulated by Law 1123 of 2007 <i>Código Disciplinario del Abogado</i> (Disciplinary Code of the Legal Profession)<sup>4</sup> and must also comply with Articles 71, 72, 73, and 74</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.ambitojuridico.com/noticias/general/trabajo-probono-abogados-para-todos> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.trust.org/impact-story/interest-in-pro-bono-on-the-rise-in-colombia/> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=87186> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.funcionpublica.gov.co/eva/gestornormativo/norma.php?i=22962> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

	of the Colombian Code of Civil Procedure. <sup>5</sup>
2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.	There are currently no laws or rules that specifically regulate pro bono legal services in Colombia. Lawyers in Colombia must obtain a licence from the <i>Consejo Superior de la Judicatura</i> to offer legal services, including engaging in bono activities.
3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?	Lawyers in Colombia do not require any additional licences to provide pro bono legal services beyond the usual local qualification to practice law.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	Only lawyers licensed in Colombia are allowed to appear in court and offer legal advice on Colombian law. <sup>6</sup> In order to requalify as a Colombian <i>abogado</i> (lawyer), foreign-qualified lawyers must: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(i) Submit an application to the Ministry of Education to validate their foreign law degree.<sup>7</sup> Additional study is required if the applicant cannot provide evidence of studies in Colombian constitutional law, administrative law, and procedural rules,<sup>8</sup> and</li> <li>(ii) Pass the <i>Examen del Estado</i> (State Bar Exam).</li> </ul>
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	Lawyers in Colombia are not required to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=ITILS-Latin-America-and-Caribbean-2019> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=ITILS-Latin-America-and-Caribbean-2019> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.mineduacion.gov.co/portal/convalidaciones/Convalidaciones-Educacion-Superior/350670:Conozca-el-proceso> (last accessed 3 January 2025).

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.lawsociety.org.uk/topics/international/doing-legal-business-in-colombia> (last accessed 3 January 2025).

<p>6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?</p>	<p>In order to obtain a law degree in Colombia, law students must provide free legal services in a <i>consultorio jurídico</i> (legal clinic) for a minimum of two semesters and a maximum of five semesters.<sup>9</sup></p>
<p>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>	<p>Although there are no mandatory targets in Colombia, signatories of the PBDA are advised to complete 20 hours annually of pro bono legal work per lawyer. Currently, there are 87 firms and organisations in Colombia that have signed up to this aspirational pro bono target. Further information regarding the PBDA statement and signatories can be found online.<sup>10</sup></p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Colombia do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.</p>
<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 (including in-house lawyers) in Colombia are not required to maintain professional indemnity legal insurance coverage for pro bono legal services.</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 in Colombia that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients.</p>
<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>According to the 2022 Thomas Reuters Foundation Index of Pro Bono, the most frequently chosen area of pro bono focus among Colombian firms was employment. The survey also identified the environment, older people’s rights, economic development, data and digital rights, as well as anti-corruption and good</p>

<sup>9</sup> [https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/programas-co/LegalApp/Documents/preguntas%20frecuentes%20\(5\).pdf#search=pro%20bono](https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/programas-co/LegalApp/Documents/preguntas%20frecuentes%20(5).pdf#search=pro%20bono) (last accessed 3 January 2025).

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.vancecenter.org/our-networks/pro-bono-network-of-the-americas/> (last accessed 30 December 2024).

	<p>governance, as areas where pro bono legal services are currently concentrated.<sup>11</sup></p> <p>In terms of unmet legal needs, the Colombian National Administrative Department of Statistics has highlighted that a significant area where advice was sought by respondents related to the quality, denial, or timeliness of healthcare services.<sup>12</sup></p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>A key provider of pro bono legal services in Colombia is <i>consultorios jurídicos</i>. These <i>consultorios jurídicos</i> are run by law schools and volunteer aspiring lawyers who are supervised by licensed attorneys. The Colombian Ministry of Justice and Law has compiled a list of the virtual <i>consultorios jurídicos</i>.<sup>13</sup> Several of the larger universities, notably <i>Universidad de los Andes</i>, have separate <i>consultorios jurídicos</i> for different unmet legal needs: migrants, microfinance, environment, disability, and prisoner rights.<sup>14</sup></p> <p>In addition to the <i>consultorio jurídicos</i>, certain law schools also run <i>grupos de derecho publico</i>, which undertake high-impact human rights litigation, mainly through constitutional actions.</p> <p>Several local and international firms based in Colombia, as well as some in-house legal departments, provide pro bono legal assistance. There are currently 87 firms and organisations in Colombia that have demonstrated a commitment to pro bono by signing up to the PBDA.</p> <p>A notable example of collaboration between law firms, investment banks, and consulting firms is <i>Compartamos con Colombia</i>.<sup>15</sup> This professional services alliance has supported the sustainable development of over 1,000 not-for-profit organisations or causes in Colombia since its foundation in 2001.</p> <p>There are additional NGOs in Colombia that provide pro bono legal services. Please refer below for the names and contact details of</p>

<sup>11</sup> [https://pbi.trust.org/documents/2022/TRF%20INDEX%20Pro%20Bono%202022%20full%20document.pdf?language\\_id=1](https://pbi.trust.org/documents/2022/TRF%20INDEX%20Pro%20Bono%202022%20full%20document.pdf?language_id=1) (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.ibanet.org/pro-bono-legal-services-a-means-of-improving-health-and-welfare-in-Colombia> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>13</sup> <https://www.minjusticia.gov.co/programas-co/LegalApp/Paginas/Consultorios-juridicos-virtuales.aspx> (last accessed 3 January 2025).

<sup>14</sup> <https://derecho.uniandes.edu.co/consultorio-juridico/clinicas-juridicas/> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

<sup>15</sup> <https://compartamos.org/quienes-somos/> (last accessed 6 January 2025).

	specific organisations.
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<p>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?</p>	<p>We are not aware of any noteworthy examples of how innovative technology or AI is being used to enable access to pro bono legal services or otherwise as part of pro bono cases or matters in Colombia.</p>
<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p><i>Fundación Pro Bono Colombia</i> is the main resource for pro bono matters in Colombia, which has been connecting lawyers to pro bono programmes since 2008.<sup>16</sup> This clearinghouse promotes the culture of pro bono in Colombia by organising legal seminars and offering training to universities and law firms. A variety of free resources are available online on a range of topics that are tailored for clients, attorneys, and judges.<sup>17</sup></p> <p>Other organisations that provide pro bono legal matters or resources in Colombia include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Comisión Colombiana de Juristas</i><sup>18</sup></li> <li>• <i>Corporación Colectivo de Abogados "José Alvear Restrepo" (CAJAR)</i><sup>19</sup></li> <li>• <i>Corporación Reiniciar — Corporación para la Defensa y Promoción de los Derechos Humanos Reiniciar</i><sup>20</sup></li> <li>• <i>Fundación Desarrollo y Paz (FUNDEPAZ)</i>.<sup>21</sup></li> </ul>
<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><i>Fundación Pro Bono Colombia</i> serves as a valuable resource for local and foreign lawyers to register and learn about pro bono opportunities. Prospective volunteers can register their interest online, and there are different options depending on whether they are (i) a law firm, (ii) an independent lawyer, or (iii) a student.<sup>22</sup></p> <p>Individuals or social organisations and micro enterprises seeking pro bono legal advice can also request assistance online through the <i>Fundación Pro Bono Colombia</i> website.<sup>23</sup></p> <p>Please also refer to the additional organisations listed above for further pro bono projects.</p>

<sup>16</sup> <https://probono.org.co/> (last accessed 14 February 2025).

<sup>17</sup> <https://probono.org.co/escuela-pro-actores-justicia/> (last accessed 3 January 2025).

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.coljuristas.org/> (last accessed 14 February 2025).

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.colectivodeabogados.org/> (last accessed 14 February 2025).

<sup>20</sup> <https://corporacionreiniciar.org/> (last accessed 14 February 2025).

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.fundepaz.org/en/home/> (last accessed 14 February 2025).

<sup>22</sup> <https://probono.org.co/formas-de-vinculacion/> (last accessed 3 January 2025).

<sup>23</sup> <https://probono.org.co/casa-de-casos/> (last accessed 3 January 2025).

<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p><i>Latin Lawyer</i> holds an annual award ceremony to recognise the achievements of practitioners across Latin America, including an award for Pro Bono Law Firm of the Year and Pro Bono Project of the Year.<sup>24</sup> The <i>ProBono Sin Fronteras</i> initiative, which is a collaborative effort between several Colombian firms that helps to support the rights of forcibly displaced people, was awarded by <i>Latin Lawyer</i> as Pro Bono Project of the Year in 2024.</p> <p><i>Latin Lawyer</i>, alongside the Cyrus R. Vance Center for International Justice, also compiles an annual list of Leading Lights to highlight the law firms making a significant contribution to enhancing a culture of pro bono in Latin America. This list, which recognised several firms from Colombia, takes into account a firm's recognition of their lawyers' pro bono work, the firm's pro bono infrastructure, the pro bono work carried out, and support of the country's pro bono clearing house.<sup>25</sup></p> <p><i>Fundación Pro Bono Colombia</i> annually presents several awards to recognise Colombian firms, lawyers, and projects that have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to pro bono work.<sup>26</sup> This clearing house also organises <i>Desafío Pro Bono Colombia</i>, a competition for Colombian law students to present projects that advance access to justice for vulnerable communities.<sup>27</sup></p>
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## Acknowledgements

Confidential.

## 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>24</sup> <https://latinlawyer.com/news-and-features/latin-lawyer-awards/2024?page=2> (last accessed 30 December 2024).

<sup>25</sup> [https://latinlawyer.com/survey/pro-bono/2024/article/pro-bono-leading-lights?utm\\_source=Pro%2Bbono%253A%2BLeading%2BLights&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=Latin%2BLawyer%2BAler](https://latinlawyer.com/survey/pro-bono/2024/article/pro-bono-leading-lights?utm_source=Pro%2Bbono%253A%2BLeading%2BLights&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Latin%2BLawyer%2BAler) (last accessed 30 December 2024).

<sup>26</sup> <https://probono.org.co/premios-probono-colombia/> (last accessed 30 December 2024).

<sup>27</sup> <https://probono.org.co/desafio-probono-colombia/> (last accessed 30 December 2024).