

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Dominican Republic¹

Introduction

Canada has a rich tradition of promoting access to justice through, among other things, pro bono legal assistance. In recent years there has been increased support for the active coordination of pro bono opportunities and, particularly as a result of the efforts of professional bodies such as the Canadian Bar Association (the “CBA”), various initiatives have been undertaken to promote, simplify and encourage pro bono participation across Canada. While pro bono legal services are generally available across Canada, several factors affect the availability of such services, including underfunding, insurance requirements, uneven coverage, fragmented approaches, discretionary eligibility criteria and a lack of information to potential clients/applicants. Notwithstanding these factors, lawyers and law students across Canada increasingly continue to provide 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"> 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. 	<p>The legal community in the Dominican Republic is increasingly recognising the value of a pro bono culture and the significant positive impact that pro bono legal work can have on democracy and justice. The Pro Bono Declaration for the Americas (the PBDA) is the founding document that helps to institutionalise pro bono legal activities by Dominican Republic lawyers, alongside the Pro Bono Foundation RD (<i>Fundación Pro Bono RD, Inc</i>) (the Foundation), which coordinates and enables the pro bono efforts. Despite these advances, much work remains to be done, including the challenge of developing a pro bono culture in law firms, the financial sustainability of clearinghouses, and more clarity on how pro bono legal work should be rewarded.</p>

¹ This chapter was drafted with the support of Mónica Fiallo Paradas of Russin, Vecchi & Heredia Bonetti.

	<p>A foreign lawyer may become a member of the Dominican Republic Bar Association:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by obtaining a law degree in the Dominican Republic (Law No. 3-19); • by obtaining validation of a law degree from an overseas university (Law No. 3-19); or • if there is a reciprocal treaty between the Dominican Republic and the government of the foreign jurisdiction in which the foreign national has a licence to practice law. <p>As for Law No. 821, this sets out the rules in respect of a number of matters, including lawyers' dress code, their behavior in the Courts of the Dominican Republic (which must be ethical, honorable, and discreet), and the requirements to practice as a lawyer in the Dominican Republic, which include the following:²</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • being a Dominican national of legal age and in enjoyment of civil rights; • holding a law degree awarded by a recognised Dominican university; • being admitted to the Dominican Republic Bar Association (<i>Colegio de Abogados</i>);³ • taking oath before the Supreme Court of Justice;⁴ and • enrolling in the lawyers' panel of a court of first instance. <p>These requirements do not differ for lawyers working as in-house counsel.</p>
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>Currently, there is no law specifically regulating the provision of pro bono legal services in the Dominican Republic in addition to those regulating the provision of legal services generally.</p> <p>Article 89 of Law No. 3-19 states that lawyers can provide legal services on a gratuitous or onerous basis.⁵</p>

² Article 73 of Law No. 821. <https://www.monografias.com/trabajos14/organ-judicial/organ-judicial> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

³ <https://colegiodeabogados.org.do/quienes-somos/> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

⁴ <http://www.poderjudicial.gob.do/> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

⁵ <https://colegiodeabogados.org.do/> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Lawyers do not require a licence to provide pro bono legal services in the Dominican Republic.</p>
<p>4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Foreign lawyers do not require a licence to provide pro bono legal services in the Dominican Republic, as long as they comply with the requirements to practice as lawyers in the Dominican Republic.</p>
<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?</p>	<p>Lawyers in the Dominican Republic are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services.</p>
<p>6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?</p>	<p>Aspiring lawyers in the Dominican Republic are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers.</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>There are no aspirational pro bono hours targets for lawyers in the Dominican Republic.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>Lawyers in the Dominican Republic do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.</p> <p>Whilst pro bono practice is not currently widely institutionalised in law firms in the Dominican Republic, some of the law firms in the Dominican Republic acknowledge pro bono when evaluating lawyers.</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 in the Dominican Republic do not require professional indemnity legal insurance cover for the provision of pro bono legal services. However, pro bono work undertaken by lawyers at a law firm is generally covered under the professional indemnity insurance of that law firm. This 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>Currently, there is no law in the Dominican Republic that prohibits the advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting of new pro bono</p>

	clients.
11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal needs?	The main areas of law that require or present opportunities for the provision of pro bono legal services in the Dominican Republic are human rights, criminal (e.g., domestic violence), and civil (e.g., employment, legal advice to SMEs).
12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?	The main providers of pro bono legal services in the Dominican Republic are NGOs, private law firms ⁶ , independent practitioners, and universities.
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 2023, the Dominican government launched the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy (ENIA). ⁷ ENIA is aimed at developing and adopting artificial intelligence in the Dominican Republic. However, due to its novelty, the use of AI has not had a significant impact overall or on pro bono matters.
14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.	<p>The obligation to provide state free legal services is established in Articles 176 and 177 of the Constitution of the Dominican Republic.⁸</p> <p>Article 177 states that: <i>“The State is responsible for organizing programs and services for free legal assistance for people who lack the financial resources to obtain legal representation of their interests, particularly for the protection of the rights of the victim, without prejudice to the powers that correspond to the Public Ministry in the field of criminal proceedings.”</i></p> <p>This is implemented by the Law of Public Defense, passed on August 12, 2004, with the approval of Law No. 277,⁹ which created the National Public Defender Service.¹⁰ The Public Defenders provide free advice and guidance before and during judicial proceedings in criminal matters.</p> <p>Along with several partners in Latin America, Cyrus R. Vance Center launched the PBDA.¹¹ The</p>

⁶ For example: https://ipadvisors.do/participacion-en-la-comunidad/?utm_; and https://minino.com.do/programa-minino-pro-bono/?lang=es&utm_.

⁷ <https://innovacionrd.gob.do/enia/> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

⁸ <http://republica-dominicana.justia.com/nacionales/constitucion-de-la-republica-dominicana/titulo-v/capitulo-vi/> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

⁹ Law 277-04, <https://www.consultoria.gov.do/Consulta/Home/FileManagement?documentId=3344695&managementType=1> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

¹⁰ <https://www.defensapublica.gob.do/index.php/servicios> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

¹¹ <https://www.vancecenter.org/our-networks/pro-bono-network-of-the-americas/> (Accessed: 10 January 2025).

	statement commits signatory law firms and other legal organisations, including those in the Dominican Republic, to undertake a minimum of 20 hours of pro bono work by each lawyer working there.
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?	Local and foreign lawyers (from participating countries) can register at Inicio/Redred: https://www.redprobono.org/
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	No specific awards for pro bono legal work exist; awards focus on NGO organizations generally. The National Centre for the Promotion and Promotion of Non-Profit Associations rewards NGOs dedicated to voluntary and non-profit work. It is attached to the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Development, which aims to promote the participation of non-profit associations in the management of national, regional, provincial, and municipal development programmes. ¹²

Acknowledgements

Name of Law Firm: Russin, Vecchi & Heredia Bonetti

Name of lawyer: Mónica Fiallo Paradas

Learn more

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

¹² <https://elnuevodiario.com.do/reconocen-labor-altruista-en-premio-nacional-voluntariado-solidario-2024/> (Accessed: 4 February 2025).