

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in El Salvador

Introduction

The provision of pro bono legal services in El Salvador has been increasing in the recent years with Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs), universities, and private law firms providing pro bono legal services to individuals and other organisations. Nevertheless, underfunding, lack of information, and lack of legislation promoting pro bono practices are the major reasons for the inapplicability, lack of use, and under-use of this resource.

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 practices and representation of Salvadoran attorneys at court is currently governed by the Organic Law of the Judicial Branch (<i>Ley Orgánica Judicial</i>).¹ Also, there are relevant rules in other laws, specifically in the diverse procedural codes/laws (Civil, Criminal, Administrative, etc.)</p> <p>Legal services can only be provided by attorneys authorised by the Supreme Court of El Salvador. The requirements to obtain a licence include having a bachelor's degree in law studies and conclusion of legal practices. In addition, in-house counsels are lawyers who are employed by a company or organisation to provide legal advice and representation exclusively for the company and the clients; the same licensing requirements apply to in-house lawyers.</p>

¹ See <https://sv.vlex.com/vid/ley-organica-judicial-644825681> (Last visited on March 3, 2025).

<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>There are no specific rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services in El Salvador; the provision of pro bono legal services is subject to the same laws as the general provision of legal services. Also, there are no special requirements for mandatory or minimum fees imposed on the provision of legal services.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>No, lawyers generally do not need a separate licence to provide pro bono legal services beyond their usual local qualification to practise law in their jurisdiction.</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>Legal services can only be provided by lawyers authorised by the Supreme Court. A foreign lawyer that wishes to practice law in El Salvador should be authorised by the Supreme Court, for which it will be necessary to authorise his or her college degree before the University of El Salvador. The procedure of authorising the college degree implies taking subjects related to Salvadoran constitutional law, among others. An indirect alternative for foreign lawyers to provide pro bono legal services is to work the cases in collaboration with an authorised attorney in El Salvador.</p>
<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?</p>	<p>No, lawyers are not required by rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.</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>Yes, all law students must provide pro bono legal assistance as a requirement for being admitted as attorneys by the Salvadoran Supreme Court. There is no minimum number of hours that aspiring lawyers must complete, but a minimum of cases where the student shall participate. The number of cases that the aspiring lawyer shall participate in depends on the regulations of the Organic Law of the Judicial Branch (<i>Ley Orgánica Judicial</i>). For example, this law establishes that they can fulfil the options of performing at least three personal appearances; at least three criminal defences, from the start of the process; or five public hearings as a defender, prosecutor, or permanent juror; or at least five civil, commercial, or labour cases, representing economically disadvantaged individuals without charge, in collaboration with the attorney general's office or another official institution responsible for legal assistance.</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>No, there are no aspirational pro bono hours targets set by the local bar association, regulatory body, or other organisations.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>There are no specific credits 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>No, there is no special requirement related to professional indemnity legal insurance, and the provision of pro bono legal services also applies to 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>No, there are no rules in El Salvador 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>The main areas of law that require pro bono legal services and where there are unmet legal needs are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family law and women’s rights² • Criminal law³ • Constitutional law and civil rights⁴ • Immigration and refugee assistance⁵ • Regulatory advice for NGOs⁶
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>NGOs in their sphere of activities, universities, and major law firms are the main providers of pro bono legal services. Some of the relevant providers of pro bono legal services are:</p>

² https://ormusa.org/centro-de-atencion-legal/?utm_source (Last viewed on 26 January 2026).

³ <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2024/12/el-salvador-mil-dias-regimen-excepcion-modelo-seguridad-a-costa-derechos-humanos/> (Last viewed on 25 January 2026).

⁴ https://www.share-elsalvador.org/socorro-juridico-humanitario.html?utm_source (Last viewed on 24 January 2026).

⁵ <https://rightsinline.org/legal-assistance-by-country/el-salvador-legal-assistance/?utm> (Last viewed on 26 January 2026).

⁶ https://ishr.ch/latest-updates/el-salvador-new-foreign-agents-law-threatens-rights-and-freedoms-of-civil-society-organizations-and-the-media/?utm_ (last viewed on 24 January 2026).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universidad Dr. José Matías Delgado — Centro de Prácticas Jurídicas⁷ • Arias⁸ • Universidad Francisco Gavidia — Centro de práctica jurídica⁹ • Romero Pineda y Asociados¹⁰ • Archbishopric of San Salvador¹¹
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?	There are no noteworthy examples of innovative technology or artificial intelligence being used to enable access to pro bono services or as part of pro bono cases or matters.
14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.	<p>There are no government-specific sources of pro bono legal services. Governmental activities of legal assistance are provided as legal aid throughout the Office of Public Defense (or in Spanish, “<i>Procuraduría General de la República</i>”).¹² Some of the relevant intermediary sources that allocate pro bono matters while also providing pro bono services are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Universidad Dr. José Matías Delgado — Centro de Prácticas Jurídicas (rcorellanao@ujmd.edu.sv)¹³ • Arias (Armando.Arias@ariaslaw.com)¹⁴ • Universidad Francisco Gavidia — Centro de práctica jurídicas¹⁵ • Romero Pineda y Asociados¹⁶ • Archbishopric of San Salvador¹⁷ • Human Rights Institute (Instituto de Derechos Humanos) Universidad José Simeón Cañas¹⁸
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?	Even though there is no public or private register, pro bono opportunities can be identified by making direct communication with NGOs, universities, and legal law firms with pro bono

⁷ See [Inicio - Universidad Dr. José Matías Delgado](#) (Last accessed on February 24, 2025).

⁸ See <https://ariaslaw.com/es/inicio> (Last accessed on February 24, 2025).

⁹ See <https://www.ufg.edu.sv/> (Last accessed on February 24, 2025).

¹⁰ See <https://www.romeropineda.com/probono-2/> (Last accessed on February 24, 2025).

¹¹ See <https://arzobispadosansalvador.org/sobre-nosotros/curia/vicaria-episcopal-promocion-humana/tutela-legal/> (Last accessed on February 24, 2025).

¹² See <https://www.pgr.gob.sv/> (Last visited on February 24, 2025).

¹³ See <https://bksite.ujmd.edu.sv/facultades/facultad-de-jurisprudencia-y-ciencias-sociales/personal-administrativo-facultad-de-jurisprudencia-y-ciencias-social/> (Last accessed February 24, 2025).

¹⁴ See <http://ariaslaw.com/es/rse/pro-bono> (Last accessed February 24, 2025).

¹⁵ See <https://carreras.ufg.edu.sv/> (Last accessed February 24, 2025).

¹⁶ See <https://www.romeropineda.com/probono/> (Last accessed February 24, 2025).

¹⁷ See <http://www.arzobispadosansalvador.org/sobre-nosotros/curia/vicaria-episcopal-promocion-humana/tutela-legal/> (Last accessed February 24, 2025).

¹⁸ See <http://www.uca.edu.sv/idhuca/> (Last accessed 17 January 2025).

	programmes.
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	No, in the case of El Salvador, there are no awards, lists, or rankings related to pro bono work.

Acknowledgements

Name of Law Firm: Francisco Armando Arias and Rafael Ernesto Burgos Medina

Name of lawyer(s): Armando Arias and Rafael Burgos

Learn more

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