

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Haiti

Introduction

Pro bono legal services in Haiti are constrained by limited resources and regulations requiring that lawyers practising in the country be Haitian citizens. The primary focus of pro bono services in Haiti centres on addressing issues raised by its turbulent politics, criminal activities, violations of human rights and various natural disasters and diseases.¹ For example, following the severe earthquake in 2010, several pro bono organisations were established to provide pro bono legal services which continue to assist Haitians with immigration matters, including applications for Temporary Protected Status (“TPS”) designation in the United States. Such pro bono legal services are provided by private lawyers but the main sources are non-governmental organisations rather than governmental organisations or functions.

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	No	No	No	Yes	No	No

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<p>1. 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>	<p>The Decree of March 29, 1979 (the “Decree”) regulates the practice of law and provision of legal services in Haiti.² Rules in the form of codes also govern the legal system including the Civil Code and the Criminal Code, and lawyers must adhere to the Deontology Code of the Haitian Federation of Bar Associations (the “Deontology Code”).</p> <p>In order to provide legal services in Haiti, the Decree provides that an individual must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be at least 18 years old; • complete a law licence (equivalent to a

¹ See <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2024/country-chapters/haiti#358f8a> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

² See the Decree of March 29, 1979 available at <https://metienne.wordpress.com/2016/10/11/decret-du-29-mars-1979-reglementant-la-profession-davocat/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

	<p>Bachelor's degree) at the State University of Haiti or any foreign licence recognised in Haiti as equivalent;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submit a certificate of good moral conduct (<i>certificat de bonne vie et moeurs</i>); • register with one of the bar associations of Haiti³; • complete a two-year internship (<i>stage</i>); and • pass an admission exam (<i>Certificat d'Aptitude à la Profession d'Avocat</i>), if applicable. Not every jurisdiction has an admission exam. <p>Importantly, Article 5 of the Decree further requires that lawyers must be Haitian citizens in order to practise law in the country.</p> <p>The requirements above also apply to in-house counsel. There is no differentiation between in-house counsel and other practising lawyers.</p>
<h3>Regulatory landscape for pro bono</h3>	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>The Law on Legal Assistance of 7 August 2018 provides a legal framework for Legal Aid Offices in the country.⁴</p> <p>In relation to pro bono, there are no specific laws or regulations that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services. However, non-Haitian, foreign-qualified lawyers are not permitted to provide legal advice in Haiti unless they are registered with one of the Haitian bar associations. The practice of law, in any form, is strictly limited to licensed lawyers in Haiti.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>There is no separate or additional licensing requirement to provide pro bono legal services in Haiti.</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>In accordance with the Decree, foreign lawyers may not practice law in Haiti, including providing any pro bono legal services, unless they are registered with one of the bar associations in Haiti.</p>

³ There are 18 bars in Haiti, one in each jurisdiction where there is a court of first instance. The bar associations are located in the following cities: Port-au-Prince, Cap-Haïtien, Cayes, Gonaïves, Jacmel, Saint-Marc, Petit-Goâve, Jérémie, Anse-à-Veau, Aquin, Fort-Liberté, Hinche, Mirebalais, Grande-Rivière du Nord, Port-de-Paix, Côteaux and Croix-des-Bouquets et Miragoâne.

⁴ As the focus of this report are "pro bono" services (i.e., the voluntary contribution of private lawyers), this chapter does not include a review of the Law on Legal Assistance as it governs a state-funded "legal aid" system.

5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	There are no requirements for lawyers in Haiti to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	Aspiring lawyers in the jurisdiction of Port-au-Prince are required to remain available to the bar and serve as public defenders in criminal matters, as stipulated in Article 24 of the Decree. There is no specified maximum or minimum requirement for mandatory hours.
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?	Bar associations in Haiti do not set specific aspirational pro bono targets for lawyers nor does any other body.
8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	Haitian lawyers do not receive any “Continuing Legal Education” or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.
Insurance and advertising	
9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers? 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?	Lawyers are not required to have professional indemnity legal insurance to cover their practice of the law or provision of pro bono legal services in Haiti.
10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?	The Decree does not have specific regulations for advertisements related to pro bono legal services. However, the Deontology Code generally prohibits lawyers from advertising their services.
Pro bono practice and culture	
11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal	Furthering human rights, democracy and justice are the priorities for pro bono work in Haiti. In addition, pro bono legal services are provided in

needs?	<p>Haiti to advocate for victims of natural disasters (such as the 2010 earthquake), including assistance to obtain safe housing, international aid and immigration opportunities, notably through the TPS designation.</p> <p>From a business perspective, micro, small and medium enterprises seek pro bono legal assistance to navigate the complexities of laws and tax regulations, including determining the most suitable business structure for their needs.</p> <p>Additionally, Haiti is a culturally rich country with numerous talented artists producing significant work. These artists need legal support to protect their copyrights and intellectual property.</p>
12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?	<p>In Haiti, there is a National Legal Aid System (which was put in place in 2007 with the collaboration of the International Legal Assistance Consortium (the “ILAC”) and the United Nations’ Mission in Haiti) and there are Legal Aid Bureaus to provide indigent people with free legal assistance which range from alternative dispute resolution to representation before courts.</p> <p>In relation to pro bono, the main providers are private lawyers who have received training in human rights, either in Haiti or abroad, and there are a number of platforms to facilitate pro bono work which are typically non-governmental organisations such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the <i>Bureau des Avocats Internationaux</i> (“BAI”) provides on-the-ground pro bono legal services in Haiti.⁵ The BAI works closely with the US-based Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (“IJDH”). The BAI and IJDH are dedicated to advancing justice and democracy in Haiti through advocacy, litigation and coalition-building both in Haiti and abroad and together they provide legal assistance to victims of human rights violations and they provide assistance to other non-governmental organisations

⁵ See <http://www.ijdh.org/about/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

	<p>and provide training to Haitian human rights lawyers.⁶ An example of one of their projects is the Lawyers' Earthquake Response Network – a network of lawyers, law professors and law students in the United States who worked with Haitian lawyers to implement a legal response to the 2010 earthquake⁷;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the <i>Défenseur des Opprimés</i> which provides legal advice and representation to victims of human rights violations⁸; • the Haitian Bridge Alliance that connects migrants with, among others, legal services⁹; and • <i>Le Bureau des Droits Humains en Haïti</i> (“BDHH”) is an independent organisation in Haiti providing pro bono legal services to vulnerable people in Haiti.¹⁰ <p>There is also the Haitian Lawyers Association (the “HLA”) which is a non-profit membership organisation dedicated to, among others, facilitating the administration of justice. The HLA works with the Legal Services of Greater Miami to provide pro-bono legal representation to Haitian immigrants in matters relating to immigration, family law, civil rights, criminal law, juvenile law, and housing.¹¹</p>
<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>While there is limited information on the use of innovative technology or artificial intelligence to enhance access to pro bono services in Haiti, advances in IT generally (online communication and digital networks) have been utilised by both local organisations in Haiti to seek pro bono services from foreign entities and by international organisations to increase the provision of such services in Haiti.</p> <p>The significance of IT in the Haitian justice system was highlighted after the 2010 earthquake. Prior</p>

⁶ See <http://www.ijdh.org/about/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

⁷ See <https://www.probono.net/news/article.294882-The-Lawyers-Earthquake-Response-Network-mobilizes-support-for-human-rights> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

⁸ <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/wp-content/uploads/sites/8/2021/06/amr360132013fr.pdf> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

⁹ <https://haitianbridgealliance.org/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

¹⁰ See <https://bdhhaiti.org/presentation-du-bdhh> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

¹¹ <https://haitianlawyersassociation.org/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

to the earthquake, courts relied on paper documents for case management and then the USAID Haiti Justice Sector Strengthening Program collaborated with the Ministry of Justice and the *Conseil Supérieur du Pouvoir Judiciaire* to build a sustainable IT infrastructure for the judiciary, including the implementation of the digital-based Case Management Information System.¹²

Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts

14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.

In Haiti, governmental legal aid is primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice and the bar association. By law, legal aid is available to all, however access to legal aid services can be inconsistent and often is unavailable in rural areas.¹³ There are no pro bono legal services that are provided by the Haitian government.

The BAI and IJDH provide pro bono legal services and resources to Haitians and have the most readily accessible and up-to-date information available online.¹⁴ Their website includes a calendar of events in Haiti and the United States for those interested in learning more about their work and the pro bono opportunities available in Haiti. Additionally, BDHH provides free legal assistance to vulnerable people such as those with restricted access to justice, victims of domestic violence and victims of human rights violations.¹⁵

There are also international non-governmental organisations which are sources of pro bono matters, such as:

- the HLA which provides opportunities to assist on pro bono matters relating to immigration, family law, civil rights, criminal law, juvenile law, and housing for Haitian immigrants in Florida; and
- the ILAC which is a Swedish non-profit

¹² See <https://chemonics.com/impact-story/cracking-the-case-to-strengthen-haitis-judicial-system/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

¹³ See https://www.unodc.org/documents/justice-and-prison-reform/LegalAid/GSLA_-_Country_Profiles.pdf (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

¹⁴ See <http://www.ijdh.org/about/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

¹⁵ See <https://bdhhaiti.org/presentation-du-bdhh> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

	<p>organisation that gathers wide-ranging legal expertise and competencies from around the world to help rebuild justice systems.</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>Lawyers interested in providing pro bono legal services to Haitians can contact the following organisations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the HLA; and <p>the Haitian TPS Pro Bono Directory (directory of U.S.-based organisations assisting Haitians with TPS applications)¹⁶.</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>Certain lawyer associations in the United States grant awards in recognition of the pro bono services which firms provide (in Haiti and elsewhere). For example, the Haitian American Lawyers Association of New York awards firms for their pro bono work on behalf of the Haitian community¹⁷ and the Florida Bar Association awards voluntary bar associations that have demonstrated a significant contribution to the delivery of legal services on a pro bono basis which the HLA won in 2023¹⁸.</p>

Acknowledgements

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Name of Individual at Local Counsel: Christelle Vaval

Learn more

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

¹⁶ See <https://www.probono.net/haitianimmigration/directory/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

¹⁷ See <https://halany.org/> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).

¹⁸ See <https://www.law.com/dailybusinessreview/2023/01/20/haitian-lawyers-association-recognized-for-advancing-akse-ak-lajistis/?sreturn=20250109-44342> (last viewed on 10 November 2025).