

# Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

## Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Kazakhstan

### Introduction

Kazakhstan’s pro bono tradition is still developing, with a growing recognition of the importance of providing free legal assistance to those unable to afford it. Historically, pro bono efforts were largely informal, driven by individual lawyers or small legal groups. However, recent years have witnessed a shift toward institutionalization, with leading law firms, bar associations, and academic institutions playing an increasingly active role. While the pro bono culture is still evolving, these initiatives signal a promising trajectory toward a more equitable legal system in Kazakhstan.

It is important to note that the concept of a pro bono institute, as it is established in European countries, did not exist in Kazakhstan. Instead, it began as a practice of providing “free advice”. Kazakhstan’s legislation also outlines specific situations in which “state-guaranteed free assistance” can be offered.

### 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	Yes	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>The legislative framework governing legal activity and aid in the Republic of Kazakhstan is based on the Law on Advocacy and Legal Assistance.<sup>1</sup> In general, there are three categories of legal professionals in Kazakhstan: advocates, legal consultants, and lawyers (jurists).</p> <p>Advocates are required to obtain a law degree, complete a mandatory internship, pass a qualification examination, and secure membership in the Collegium of Advocates. They hold exclusive rights to act as defence counsel in</p>

<sup>1</sup> The Law on Advocacy and Legal Assistance. See [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=33024087#activate\\_doc=2](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=33024087#activate_doc=2) (last visited 9 February 2025).

	<p>criminal proceedings and to provide certain types of legal assistance guaranteed by the state.</p> <p>Legal consultants must have at least two years of legal experience, pass a professional examination, and become members of the Chamber of Legal Consultants. They may represent clients in civil, administrative, and commercial disputes. In criminal proceedings, however, their role is limited to handling civil claims arising within the case, and may not act as defence counsel.</p> <p>Lawyers (jurists) are persons who hold a law degree but did not complete a qualification examination or professional examination. Lawyers (jurists) cannot appear in court on behalf of third parties, although they may represent their employers in court in their capacity as employees.</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>In Kazakhstan, there is no formal pro bono regime. Pro bono legal services are not regulated by law, and legal professionals are under no professional obligation to provide such services. If advocates, legal consultants, or lawyers choose to offer pro bono legal services, they do so entirely at their own discretion, without oversight, institutional frameworks, or reporting requirements. In practice, pro bono in Kazakhstan remains voluntary, unstructured, and dependent solely on a legal professional's own initiative.</p> <p>It should be noted that there is a system of state-guaranteed legal aid under the Law on Advocacy and Legal Assistance. It entitles certain groups – such as low-income individuals, persons with disabilities, veterans and victims of domestic violence – to legal support funded by the state. The work is carried out by advocates and legal consultants, whose services are compensated at tariff rates set by the government. This legal aid mechanism is distinct from pro bono: it is mandatory, institutionalised, and state-financed, rather than voluntary and uncompensated.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>In Kazakhstan, lawyers do not require a separate license to provide pro bono legal services beyond the usual local qualification to practice law.</p>
<p>4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any</p>	<p>In Kazakhstan, there are no separate rules</p>

<p>additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>governing pro bono services by foreign-qualified lawyers. Foreign lawyers are not required to obtain any additional licence to provide pro bono services.</p> <p>In practice, foreign-qualified lawyers will practice as lawyers (jurists) or legal consultants if they satisfy the relevant requirements (as described above). However, foreign lawyers cannot become advocates, as Kazakh citizenship is a prerequisite for admission to the Collegium of Advocates. Consequently, while foreign-qualified lawyers may freely engage in advisory and transactional pro bono services, their involvement in criminal defence will not be allowed.</p>
<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?</p>	<p>In Kazakhstan, there is no legal requirement for lawyers to work a minimum number of pro bono hours. The provision of pro bono legal services is generally voluntary and not mandated by law or professional regulations.</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>In Kazakhstan, aspiring lawyers are not required to complete a minimum number of pro bono legal service hours as part of the licensing process. According to the Law on Advocacy and Legal Assistance, the licensing of advocates involves meeting academic qualifications, completing an internship, and passing a bar examination.</p> <p>While the law emphasizes the provision of legal aid as a professional responsibility, it does not mandate pro bono work as a prerequisite for obtaining a license to practice law.</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>In Kazakhstan, there are no mandatory pro bono hour targets set by local bar associations or regulatory bodies. Although, such requirements can be set by the internal policies of the Collegium of Advocates or the Chamber of Legal Consultants.<sup>2</sup> In practice such obligations are not enforced and participation remains entirely voluntary.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>In the legislation of the Republic of Kazakhstan, there are no provisions explicitly granting Continuing Legal Education (CLE) credits or equivalent recognition for pro bono hours worked by lawyers.</p>

<sup>2</sup> See, for example, the *Regulation on the Scope and Procedure for Provision of Complex Legal Assistance and Pro Bono* adopted by the Chamber of Legal Consultants “Kazakhstan Bar Association”. Available at: [link](#) (English version provided on page 17 of the PDF file, last visited on 10 November 2025).

## Insurance and advertising

<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>In Kazakhstan, professional indemnity insurance is a statutory prerequisite for the practice of advocates and legal consultants. Articles 36 and 77 of the Law on Advocacy and Legal Assistance require that they maintain valid professional liability cover before rendering any legal services (including pro bono legal services). Pro bono legal services does not require separate insurance; it falls under the professional indemnity insurance.</p> <p>Lawyers (jurists) are not required to obtain professional indemnity insurance.</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 specific rules on the advertising of pro bono services in Kazakhstan. However, for advocates, the Code of professional ethics of advocates<sup>3</sup> explicitly provides that “<i>self-promotion is incompatible with the ethical standards of the profession.</i>” It further provides that information about an advocate or an advocate’s organisation is permissible only if it is objective, accurate and clear, and does not include subjective evaluations, comparisons with other advocates, or statements that could mislead clients.</p>

## Pro bono practice and culture

<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 requiring or presenting opportunities for pro bono work in Kazakhstan include family law, labor law, and human rights. Family law often involves assisting low-income individuals with divorce, custody, or domestic violence cases. Labor law issues, such as wrongful termination or workplace discrimination, frequently impact vulnerable workers who cannot afford legal representation. Human rights cases, including support for victims of trafficking, refugees, or asylum seekers, also present significant pro bono opportunities.</p> <p>Additionally, consumer rights disputes, access to social benefits, and addressing environmental law violations through public interest litigation are key areas where pro bono efforts can make a</p>
--	---

<sup>3</sup> *Code of Professional Ethics of Advocates* (approved by the Second Republican Conference of Delegates of the Collegium of Advocates on 26 September 2014, as amended on 19 February 2022). See: [https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc\\_id=31643846&pos=6;-111#pos=6;-111](https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=31643846&pos=6;-111#pos=6;-111) (last visited 10 November 2025).

	<p>difference.</p> <p>Major unmet legal needs in Kazakhstan stem from limited access to justice for disadvantaged groups. Many individuals lack awareness of their legal rights or the means to address disputes effectively. Vulnerable populations, such as persons with disabilities, low-income families, and rural residents, often face challenges in obtaining legal assistance.</p>
12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?	<p>The main providers are NGOs, law firms, universities, and corporate organisations. NGOs focusing on human rights, environmental protection, or social justice often assist vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Local and international law firms occasionally undertake pro bono work within their corporate social responsibility programmes.</p> <p>Universities and corporate organisations may also provide legal clinics or advisory support.</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>In Kazakhstan, the use of innovative technology and artificial intelligence in pro bono work remains limited. There are no dedicated state-backed platforms or AI tools specifically designed to support pro bono activities. Nevertheless, some digital initiatives play an important role in expanding access to legal advice.</p> <p>The most notable is the “Sprosi Yurista” (Ask a Lawyer) service on the Paragraph legal information system,<sup>4</sup> where individuals can submit questions online and receive free written answers. Contributions are made by university legal clinics, NGOs, and legal consultants, effectively creating a digital pro bono channel for the public.</p>
Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts	
14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.	<p>In Kazakhstan, there is no centralised mechanism for the coordination of pro bono matters. Instead, requests for assistance arise through multiple informal channels:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Collegium of Advocates and Chamber of Legal Consultants</b> – individuals frequently apply directly to these professional bodies, which may distribute cases among volunteer</li> </ul>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://jurhelp.prg.kz/>

	<p>members.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Individual lawyers and law firms</b> – requests are often addressed directly to practitioners, particularly in larger cities.</li> <li>• <b>University legal clinics</b> – clinics operated by law schools provide a first point of contact for many citizens; where they lack capacity or expertise, they redirect matters to practising advocates, legal consultants, or firms.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• <b>NGOs</b> – human rights, social justice, and environmental organisations regularly generate pro bono matters and cooperate with legal professionals in addressing them.<sup>6</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>International networks</b> – organisations such as PILnet occasionally act as intermediaries, connecting local requests with international firms or lawyers.</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>No centralised pro bono clearinghouse exists in Kazakhstan. However, the Collegiums of Advocates and the Chambers of Legal Consultants usually circulate information on opportunities. Beyond these professional associations, pro bono matters are generally distributed informally through NGOs, universities, or direct approaches from individuals and organisations in need of assistance.</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>There are currently no national awards, official rankings, or formal lists dedicated specifically to pro bono work in Kazakhstan. Neither the Collegiums of Advocates nor the Chambers of Legal Consultants maintain registers or recognition systems for voluntary legal assistance.</p> <p>In practice, acknowledgement of pro bono efforts is limited to occasional references by NGOs, universities, or international organisations – for example, PILnet or foreign law firms sometimes highlight participation in cross-border pro bono projects. However, there is no systematic framework for recognising or ranking</p>

<sup>5</sup> See <https://www.kimep.kz/school-of-law/en/legal-clinic/> (last visited 7 February 2025).

<sup>6</sup> See [www.bureau.kz](http://www.bureau.kz) (last visited 7 February 2025).

	lawyers or firms on the basis of their pro bono contributions within Kazakhstan.
--	--

### Acknowledgements

**Name of Local Counsel:** Kinstellar

**Name of Individual at Local Counsel:** Joel Benjamin- Managing Partner; Usen Tastanbekov- Junior Associate

### Learn more

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