

# Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

## Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Malta

### Introduction

Malta's pro bono tradition is relatively informal and driven by the individual initiatives of lawyers, law firms, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). While there is no formal regulatory framework or mandatory pro bono requirement, the legal community demonstrates a commitment to access to justice by voluntarily assisting vulnerable groups such as asylum seekers, low-income families, and victims of domestic violence. Pro bono efforts in Malta are often coordinated through collaborations with NGOs and community organisations, reflecting a strong emphasis on social responsibility within the legal profession.

### 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	Yes	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 provision of legal services in Malta is regulated by the <i>Code of Organization and Civil Procedure (COCP)</i><sup>1</sup>, Chapter 12 of the Laws of Malta. To practice as an advocate, an individual must hold a warrant issued by the President of Malta under the Public Seal, as per Article 79 of the COCP. Requirements include obtaining a degree in law, completing a one-year apprenticeship, attending Superior Court sittings, and demonstrating proficiency in the Maltese language. Significantly, the <i>Legal Profession (Reform) Act</i><sup>2</sup>, Act No. XIX of 2021, which came into force on 20th April 2021, introduced substantial reforms to enhance the regulation of legal professionals. This Act established a mandatory register for all advocates and legal</p>

<sup>1</sup> <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/12/eng/pdf>

<sup>2</sup> <https://legislation.mt/eli/act/2021/19/eng>

	<p>procurators holding a warrant in Malta, thereby increasing transparency and accountability within the profession.</p> <p>In-house counsel, though also required to hold a valid warrant, typically provide legal services solely to their employing organisation. While they are bound by the same ethical and professional standards, including confidentiality and integrity, they are exempt from certain obligations applicable to private practice, such as maintaining independent chambers<sup>3</sup>.</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>In Malta, the provision of pro bono legal services is not explicitly regulated under a specific legislative framework, but it falls within the broader regulation of legal services under the COCP. Advocates offering pro bono services must still adhere to their professional and ethical obligations, including those outlined in the <i>Code of Ethics and Conduct for Advocates</i><sup>4</sup>. There are no statutory limitations on providing free legal services, nor are there mandatory or minimum fees imposed under Maltese law, allowing advocates to voluntarily offer pro bono services at their discretion.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>In Malta, lawyers do not require a separate license to provide pro bono legal services beyond the usual qualifications needed to practice law (as outlined above).</p> <p>The provision of pro bono legal services is considered an extension of an advocate's professional activities, and as such, the same ethical and professional obligations apply. These include adherence to the <i>Code of Ethics and Conduct for Advocates</i>, confidentiality requirements, and the duty to act in the best interests of their clients. There are no additional regulatory requirements or licenses specific to pro bono services in Malta.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Obtaining and maintaining a warrant; Compliance with ethical and professional standards; Client representation; Professional indemnity insurance; Maintenance of independent legal chambers; Financial obligations; Continuing professional development (CPD); Advertising and solicitation; Court obligations; Duty to report; Membership and regulatory compliance; Tax and social security compliance; Record keeping; Compliance with the Legal Profession (Reform) Act; and Avoidance of unethical practices.

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/17015?utm\\_source](https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/handle/123456789/17015?utm_source)

<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 an additional license to provide pro bono legal services in Canada, provided that they are appropriately licensed to practice in the relevant province/territory.</p> <p>Foreign-trained lawyers who want to practice in Canada must first obtain an NCA Certificate of Qualification, then complete the provincial bar process (exams and articling) in the jurisdiction where they intend to practice.<sup>5</sup></p> <p>European Union lawyers may benefit from mutual recognition of qualifications under Directive 98/5/EC<sup>6</sup>, implemented in Malta through the <i>Mutual Recognition of Qualifications Regulations</i><sup>7</sup>, Chapter 451 of the Laws of Malta. These lawyers may register with the competent authority, such as the <i>Committee for Advocates and Legal Procurators</i><sup>8</sup>, to provide services under their home title. However, they remain subject to local ethical and professional standards. For detailed guidance, foreign lawyers should consult the <i>Chamber of Advocates Malta</i><sup>9</sup>.</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 Malta, there is no legal or regulatory requirement for lawyers to work a minimum number of pro bono hours. The provision of pro bono legal services is entirely voluntary and left to the discretion of individual advocates or law firms.</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 Malta are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers. However, in 2017 a <i>Legal Clinic</i><sup>10</sup> was formally inaugurated in the Law Faculty at the University of Malta. Serving at the legal clinic has become obligatory for all law students reading for their Masters and carries a significant credit weighting.</p>

<sup>5</sup> <https://nca.legal/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1998/5/oj/eng>

<sup>7</sup> <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/451/eng/pdf>

<sup>8</sup> Section 5, Commission for the Administration of Justice Act: <https://legislation.mt/eli/cap/369/eng>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.avukati.org/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.um.edu.mt/services/resourcecentres/crc/>

<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 Malta, there are no mandatory or aspirational pro bono hour targets set by the Chamber of Advocates or any other regulatory body for lawyers. The provision of pro bono legal services is entirely voluntary and not governed by formal targets or guidelines.</p> <p>While the <i>Code of Ethics and Conduct for Advocates</i> emphasises the duty of advocates to contribute to the public good and uphold access to justice, it does not establish specific pro bono goals. Individual lawyers and law firms may, at their discretion, set their own pro bono targets or participate in initiatives promoting voluntary legal assistance to underserved communities.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>In Malta, lawyers do not currently receive “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked. While the Chamber of Advocates requires members to engage in ongoing professional development to maintain their knowledge and skills, pro bono work is not formally recognised as a substitute for or contribution toward these requirements.</p> <p>Professional development obligations typically involve attendance at seminars, workshops, and other educational events approved by the Chamber of Advocates or relevant regulatory bodies. While pro bono work is encouraged as a way to contribute to the public good, it is considered separate from formal CLE activities.</p>
<b>Insurance and advertising</b>	
<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 organisation working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>In Malta, there is no legal requirement for lawyers to hold professional indemnity insurance, whether for paid or pro bono legal services. However, obtaining such insurance is strongly recommended to protect against potential claims of professional negligence or errors. This recommendation applies equally to in-house lawyers, especially if they provide pro bono services outside their employment scope.</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or</p>	<p>The Chamber of Advocates’ Guidelines for Advertising are relatively strict and limit the</p>

<p>soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>content of such advertising to the dissemination of essential information concerning the advocates' practice. The advertising may include the following information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Name of partners including academic qualifications; and name of firm (if applicable).</li> <li>b) Office address and hours (if applicable).</li> <li>c) Telephone, facsimile and electronic contact numbers.</li> <li>d) Listing of Practice Areas.</li> <li>e) Basis or method for charging.</li> </ul> <p>The advertising material shall not include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) statements of comparison with other practitioners, local or overseas, including by reference to size, number of quantity of clients, turnover and success rate.</li> <li>b) descriptions of practice areas by reference to "expert", "specialist" or similar terminology.</li> <li>c) Identifications or description of clients.</li> <li>(d) Reference to any public or judicial office held or previously held by practitioners.</li> </ul> <p>These advertising standards apply regardless of whether the work done is pro bono or on a commercial basis.</p>
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**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>In Malta, pro bono opportunities primarily arise in areas of law affecting vulnerable or underserved populations. Key areas include human rights and immigration law, where asylum seekers and refugees require assistance with residency or asylum applications, and family law, addressing issues such as domestic violence, custody disputes, and divorce. Pro bono work is also commonly undertaken in the context of employment law for workers facing discrimination or unfair dismissal, and in social security and housing law to help individuals secure access to benefits or resolve tenancy disputes. Additionally, criminal justice presents opportunities for pro bono support,</p>
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	<p>complementing Malta's state-provided legal aid system<sup>11</sup>, and consumer and debt law requires assistance for individuals dealing with insolvency or unfair practices.</p> <p>The major unmet legal needs include access to justice for low-income families, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups, as well as legal support for NGOs and social enterprises on governance and compliance matters.</p> <p><i>Environmental law</i> is also an emerging area, with communities seeking legal advice to advocate for sustainable development and environmental protection. These areas reflect a significant demand for legal services to address societal inequities and improve access to justice.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>Pro bono legal services in Malta are provided by a combination of organisations and individuals across different sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Private Law Firms</b></li> <li>- <b>Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs)</b> like the Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS)<sup>12</sup> and Aditus Foundation<sup>13</sup> offer free legal support, particularly in areas such as asylum, migration and human rights</li> <li>- <b>University of Malta</b>, specifically the Faculty of Laws<sup>14</sup> provides opportunities for law students to engage in pro bono work under the supervision of qualified lawyers, contributing to access to justice for disadvantaged individuals.</li> </ul> <p><b>Corporate Organisations and In-House Counsel</b>, often in collaboration with NGOs or through partnerships with private law firms, to support community legal needs.</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>In Malta, the use of innovative technology and AI in pro bono legal services is emerging but still limited. AI-driven tools, such as chatbots and online platforms, are being explored to provide preliminary legal guidance and streamline the</p>

<sup>11</sup> [https://legalaidmalta.gov.mt/?utm\\_source](https://legalaidmalta.gov.mt/?utm_source)

<sup>12</sup> <https://jrs.net/en/country/malta/>

<sup>13</sup> <https://aditus.org.mt/>

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.um.edu.mt/laws/>

intake process for pro bono cases. Document automation tools and AI-powered legal research platforms are also being adopted to draft legal documents and access relevant legal materials efficiently, saving time for pro bono lawyers but no structured, authoritative data is available on the nature and extent of such adoption.

Additionally, virtual collaboration tools, including video conferencing and cloud-based document sharing, have facilitated remote pro bono work, enabling lawyers to assist clients across geographical barriers. These technologies are particularly valuable for vulnerable groups, such as asylum seekers and migrants, who may have limited access to traditional legal services, enhancing access to justice in Malta.

### Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts

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

In Malta, governmental and non-governmental organisations provide sources and resources for pro bono legal matters. Notable examples include:

**Governmental:**

- **Legal Aid Malta** has the purpose of providing assistance to low-income people who are unable to afford legal representation and access to the court system. It seeks to provide access to justice by ensuring equality before the law, the right to counsel and the right to a fair trial to local people.

**NGOs:**

- **Aditus Foundation** focuses on human rights and migration issues, offering legal advice on legal rights, procedures, and strategic litigation for vulnerable groups.
- **JRS** provides legal assistance to asylum seekers and refugees, supporting them through Malta's legal and administrative system.
- **Caritas Malta**<sup>15</sup> offers pro bono legal services as part of its broader social support initiatives, particularly for low-income families and vulnerable persons.

**University Clinics:**

- **University of Malta Faculty of Laws:**

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.caritasmalta.org/>

	<p>Hosts legal clinics where law students, under supervision, provide pro bono legal services to individuals with limited means.</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>In addition to the sources mentioned above, lawyers seeking pro bono opportunities in Malta may explore the following options:</p> <p><b>Local Networks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The <b>Public Interest Litigation Network (PILN)</b>, established by The Daphne Caruana Galizia Foundation, is a pro bono network of lawyers specialising in media, human rights, commercial, environmental and planning, and criminal law that pursues justice and accountability in public interest cases to strengthen the rule of law in Malta.<sup>16</sup></li> <li>• <b>Aditus Foundation</b> runs a Legal Unit of lawyers and law students that provides free legal services by offering legal information and advice, intervening in or referring cases, fostering a pro bono culture in Malta, and building capacity to address pressing human rights concerns.</li> <li>• Volunteers and lawyers can register to provide pro bono family law assistance through <b>Volunteers Malta / Fidem Foundation</b>.<sup>17</sup></li> </ul> <p><b>International Networks:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>PILnet (The Global Network for Public Interest Law)</b><sup>18</sup>: PILnet connects lawyers globally with pro bono opportunities, including in Malta, through its network of public interest projects.</li> <li>• <b>TrustLaw (Thomson Reuters Foundation)</b><sup>19</sup>: TrustLaw links lawyers with NGOs and social enterprises requiring pro bono legal assistance. While not Malta-specific, it offers</li> </ul>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.piln.mt/about/>

<sup>17</sup> [https://volunteersmalta.com/listing/family-lawyer/?utm\\_source](https://volunteersmalta.com/listing/family-lawyer/?utm_source)

<sup>18</sup> <https://www.pilnet.org/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://www.trust.org/trustlaw/>

	<p>opportunities that can involve or impact Maltese matters.</p> <p>Some private law firms have internal pro bono programs or partnerships with NGOs to coordinate pro bono initiatives. Lawyers can reach out to these firms directly to inquire about opportunities to collaborate.</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>There are no formal awards, lists, or rankings dedicated specifically to pro bono work at a national level. However, lawyers and firms engaging in significant pro bono initiatives may gain recognition through broader legal and corporate responsibility platforms. Some relevant examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Chamber of Advocates:</b> While the Chamber of Advocates does not maintain formal awards for pro bono work, it may informally acknowledge contributions to access to justice and pro bono initiatives during events or through its communications.</li> <li>- <b>NGO Acknowledgements:</b> Organisations such as the Aditus Foundation<sup>20</sup> and JRS<sup>21</sup> often recognise the efforts of volunteer lawyers who collaborate with them on pro bono projects. This recognition may be informal or featured in annual reports or public events.</li> </ul> <p><b>International Platforms:</b> International networks like TrustLaw or PILnet occasionally acknowledge pro bono work in specific regions, including Malta, through global awards or case studies. Lawyers participating in these platforms may gain recognition for their contributions.</p>

## Acknowledgements

Name of Local Counsel: GVZH Advocates

Name of Individual at Local Counsel: Dr Andrew J Zammit

## Learn more

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

<sup>20</sup> <https://aditus.org.mt/>

<sup>21</sup> <https://jrs.net/en/country/malta/>