

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Mexico

Introduction

Mexico's pro bono legal tradition is developing in response to the significant need for accessible legal representation, as many citizens rely on limited legal assistance due to the high costs associated with professional legal services. Historically, the Mexican government has focused on state-funded legal aid institutions, but gaps in service have prompted private attorneys, law firms and NGOs to create organized and sustainable pro bono practices. Notable contributors include law firms, universities, clearing houses and known organizations like *Centro Mexicano Pro Bono*, the Trevor Project and *Fundación Appleseed Mexico*, which act as intermediators to facilitate connections between lawyers and vulnerable populations depending on specific needs.

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 Law for the Regulation of Constitutional Article 5 Regarding the Practice of Professions in Mexico City (<i>Ley Reglamentaria del Artículo 5 Constitucional, relativa al ejercicio de las profesiones en la Ciudad de México</i>), commonly referred to as the "Professions Law", governs the right for Mexican citizens to practice law (noting that non-citizens may also practice law in Mexico, provided certain conditions are met, as further specified in question (b)(3) below). This statute is applicable at both federal and local levels, specifically within Mexico City, while also addressing matters that fall under federal jurisdiction.</p> <p>Other states in Mexico have enacted their own legislation concerning the right to practice law. In some instances, these states defer to the</p>

	<p>provisions established by the Professions Law in Mexico City.</p> <p>In order to practice law, individuals must obtain a professional degree from the General Professions Bureau (<i>Dirección General de Profesiones</i>). Basic requirements include: (i) completion of 4-5 years of legal education to obtain a law degree; (ii) registration of such degree before the Federal Ministry of Education; (iii) obtaining a professional license (<i>cédula profesional</i>) which is valid on a federal basis; and (iv) proof of having rendered community service (as further specified in question (b)(5) below).</p> <p>No mandatory bar membership, written mandatory codes of conduct or continuing education requirements exist for individuals who wish to practice law in Mexico.</p> <p>No distinction is made between in-house and outside counsel under Mexican law regarding privileges and protections.</p>
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>Although there are no specific regulations mandating pro bono work in Mexico (aside from community service, as described in question (b)(5) below), several recent private soft law initiatives have emerged to promote social responsibility within the legal community and enhance access to justice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estándares Pro Bono México: essentially, this initiative encourages lawyers and firms to commit to providing pro bono services, thereby fostering a culture of social responsibility; • NGO collaboration: organizations like Appleseed Mexico and Centro Mexicano Pro Bono identify major issues relating to access to justice and connect lawyers with vulnerable populations, facilitating access to legal support for those in need¹; and • United Nations Global Compact: law firms in Mexico can elect to be a signatory and implement a higher standard to promote pro bono services in the local community.

¹ Source: <https://www.probono.mx/pro-bono-practices-and-opportunities-in-mexico/> (last visited in January 2025).

<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>No, lawyers in Mexico do not need a licence and there are no additional requirements for providing pro bono legal services beyond the general requirements to practice law.</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 need a specific licence to provide pro bono services in Mexico, but they must be properly admitted to practice law in Mexico by (i) registering their foreign degree before Mexican authorities (e.g. Federal Ministry of Education – <i>Secretaría de Educación Pública</i>); (ii) passing a legal exam after revalidating their legal studies; and (iii) obtaining approval based on reciprocity rules with their country.</p> <p>Foreign lawyers can practice in Mexico if there is an international treaty between Mexico and the lawyer’s home country. Without such a treaty, the ability to practice law in Mexico depends on international reciprocity and meeting all Mexican legal requirements. A foreign lawyer’s legal studies can be partially or fully validated in Mexico. After validation, foreign lawyers must pass a legal exam to be admitted to practice. Only then can they register their professional license to practice law in Mexico (as described in the paragraph above).</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, there is no specific legal requirement for minimum pro bono hours. However, private law firms often ask attorneys to fulfill a certain number of pro bono hours each year, pursuant to internal policies and metrics.</p> <p>Some private efforts have been made to establish an industry standard with respect to the number of pro bono hours worked by lawyers. For example, beginning in 2008, when a number of firms in Mexico signed the Pro Bono Declaration of the Americas under which they committed to an average of more than 20 hours per lawyer per annum². Such commitment was further confirmed by other firms that became signatories to <i>Estandares Pro Bono México</i>³ and followed by lawyer associations in Mexico such</p>

² See, for example: <https://www.vancecenter.org/pro-bono-declaration-of-the-americas-adds-7-new-signatories/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

³ <https://estandaresprobono.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

	as the <i>Barra Mexicana de Abogados</i> ⁴ , <i>Asociación Nacional de Abogados de Empresa</i> ⁵ and the <i>Ilustre Colegio de Abogados de México</i> ⁶ that have continued, each within their own activities, to promote pro bono work in Mexico.
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	No. While aspiring lawyers must complete what is known in Mexico as “community service” (<i>Servicio Social</i>), which has minimum hourly requirements of service by each aspiring lawyer, such community service requirement is different and much broader than pro bono legal work. Even though the work and services that fall within the accepted community service for such programs includes, in the case of lawyers, certain activities that could fall within pro bono legal services, it also encompasses many other services and activities. Furthermore, such community service requirement applies to all university graduates and is not specific for aspiring attorneys.
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?	Yes, as mentioned in question (b)(4) above, there are aspirational pro bono targets in Mexico, even though they are not mandatory. Some include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Pro Bono Declaration for the Americas (<i>PBDA</i>), pursuant to which law firms pledge to complete at least 20 hours of pro bono work per lawyer each year;⁷ • the National Association of Corporate Lawyers (<i>Asociación Nacional de Abogados de Empresa</i>) (<i>ANADE</i>), which has a continuous education annual program, which allows associates to become certified by fulfilling the requirements established by the board of directors, such as attendance at academic events organized by ANADE and completion of a certain number of pro bono hours, probationary activities and professional ethics sessions. Amongst other requirements, in order to obtain the ANADE certification, lawyers

⁴ <https://www.bma.org.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

⁵ <https://anade.org.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

⁶ <https://incam.org/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

⁷ See such declaration at: <https://www.vancecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/english.pdf> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

	<p>must complete at least 10 hours of social service or pro bono work,⁸ and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the Mexican Bar Association B.C. (<i>Barra Mexicana de Abogados, A.C.</i>), which has a special foundation that aims to grant free access to justice for Mexican citizens by providing highly qualified pro bono legal services and assists non-profit organizations.
8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	No, lawyers in Mexico do not receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.
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>Lawyers in Mexico do not need professional indemnity insurance to provide legal services. This also applies for all pro bono legal services and applies to both private practice and in-house lawyers.</p> <p>The only exceptions are public attestors (notaries public and commercial attestors), who must have mandatory insurance coverage to cover professional liability pursuant to applicable law.</p> <p>Since insurance is not required in respect of pro bono legal services provided by lawyers, there is no need for lawyers to work under the cover of a pro bono provider or organization. However, some law firms and organizations choose to maintain professional liability insurance as a best practice.</p>
10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?	No, there are no specific rules in Mexico that limit or prohibit advertising pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients. However, any advertising or solicitation must comply with regulations that govern legal advertising and solicitation in Mexico. The Federal Consumer Protection Agency (<i>Produraduría Federal del Consumidor</i>) is in charge of promoting and protecting the rights and interests of the consumer, as well as ensuring fairness and legal security in the relationship between suppliers and consumers, and complies with this through the

⁸ For more information, please refer to: <https://anade.org.mx/certificacion> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

	Federal Consumer Protection Law ⁹ and its Regulations for the purpose of monitoring the commercial advertising behavior of the various suppliers participating in consumer relations.
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 needs?	<p>The scale of unmet legal needs is substantial. With more than approximately 45 million Mexican people living in poverty¹⁰, the rule of law and access to justice is experienced across Mexico's 32 states very differently. Main areas that traditionally have required pro bono services are: human rights protection, family law matters, criminal cases and legal assistance to non-profit organisations (including tax, corporate, labor and anti-money laundering advice).</p> <p>Specialists across many sectors have a concern that the implementation of the recently approved judiciary reform¹¹ will negatively affect access to justice and increase the scope of services for which pro bono work will be required in relation to human rights and in assisting the general population's access to the legal system.</p>
12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?	In addition to sole practitioners and law firms across Mexico, who are undoubtedly the main pro bono legal service providers in Mexico, for the last 15 years, the Mexican legal community has made efforts to promote and institutionalise pro bono legal services. Such an effort has been reflected by the growth and consolidation of important projects that are essential to the activities of NGOs, such as Centro Mexicano Pro Bono and Appleseed Mexico, which have been instrumental in providing pro bono assistance to private individuals and public sector institutions. An example of how pro bono services have evolved is the <i>Estándares pro bono México</i> , which is a movement that emerged as a foundational commitment that (i) establishes basic principles for pro bono work; (ii) connects law firms with pro bono opportunities; and (iii)

⁹ https://www.profeco.gob.mx/juridico/pdf/l_ifpc_ultimo_camdip.pdf (last visited in January 2025).

¹⁰ As reported by the website of INEGI: <https://www.inegi.org.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

¹¹ See: https://dof.gob.mx/nota_detalle.php?codigo=5738985&fecha=15/09/2024#gsc.tab=0 (last visited on 24 September 2025).

	strengthens collaboration between providers.
<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>Automated legal assistance: Appleseed Mexico engages in partnerships that often involve technological solutions for legal aid organisations, focusing on policy research and advocacy through data analysis and impact litigation strategies.</p> <p>Case management systems: the <i>Centro Mexicano Pro Bono</i> developed automated tools for managing and tracking pro bono cases. These systems aim to streamline the process for attorneys and ensure timely assistance to beneficiaries, including vulnerable communities and micro-entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Document automation: law firms in Mexico are increasingly adopting document automation tools to expedite the preparation of legal documents for pro bono cases.</p>
Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts	
<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Centro Mexicano Pro Bono:¹² with over 10 years of experience, this organisation is dedicated to addressing corruption, impunity, and inequality. It connects pro bono beneficiaries with a robust pro bono network of leading law firms in Mexico and in-house legal teams from prominent companies. These efforts benefit vulnerable populations, civil society organizations, micro-entrepreneurs, and social enterprises. Additionally, the organisation collaborates with national and international NGOs to develop and implement high-impact pro bono projects.</p> <p>Appleseed Foundation Mexico:¹³ this organisation is a Civil Society Organisation (CSO) with over 20 years of experience in pro bono work, uniting more than 70 law firms in its network. It supports thousands of organizations and leads numerous systemic change projects nationwide, including binational initiatives.</p> <p>Other clearing houses: clearing houses are non-</p>

¹² <https://www.probono.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

¹³ <https://appleseedmexico.org/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

	profit organisations that evaluate and assign cases to appropriate legal providers and verify beneficiary eligibility and vulnerability.
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>See, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Centro Mexicano Pro Bono</i>;¹⁴ • <i>Fundación Appleseed Mexico</i>;¹⁵ • <i>Fundación Barra Mexicana</i>;¹⁶ and • <i>Estándares Pro Bono México</i>.¹⁷ <p>While these organisations exist, there is no formal public or private organisation in Mexico that openly admits attorneys specifically for pro bono opportunities. Instead, lawyers typically connect with these organisations through informal networks and direct contact.</p>
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	<p>Pro Bono Leading Lights: this award is an annual recognition by Latin Lawyer and the Vance Center, which evaluate law firms based on (i) pro bono infrastructure; (ii) recognition of lawyers' pro bono work; (iii) volume of pro bono work; and (iv) support of clearing houses.</p> <p>Appleseed Mexico Foundation Awards: these awards involve an annual recognition ceremony for law firms with categories including: (i) Pro Bono Merit Recognition; (ii) Pro Bono Career; and (iii) Pro Bono Partner.</p>

Acknowledgements

Name of Local Counsel: Creel, García-Cuéllar, Aiza y Enríquez, S.C

Name of Individual at Local Counsel: Carlos Del Río Santiso

Learn more

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

¹⁴ <https://www.probono.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

¹⁵ <https://appleseedmexico.org/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

¹⁶ <https://fbma.org.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).

¹⁷ <https://estandaresprobono.mx/> (last visited on 24 September 2025).