

# Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

## Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Paraguay

### Introduction

Paraguay has a tradition of providing free legal assistance for citizens with limited means, and the Ministry of Public Defense has over 390 paid attorneys who support and provide legal advice to such individuals. In addition to legal aid provided by the public sector there is also an increasing movement among private law firms to provide free legal advice to vulnerable individuals, with pro bono culture expanding across local law firms and universities throughout Paraguay. Pro bono practice faces a unique legal challenge under the Legal Fees Law, which theoretically allows pro bono lawyers to claim fees from clients, though reputable firms mitigate this risk through professional ethical commitments. This survey summarizes the existing legal regime relevant to the provision of pro bono legal services in Paraguay.

### 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"> <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 Paraguay is governed by Law No. 879/81 “Judicial Organization Code” (the “<b>Code</b>”). The Code also establishes the requirements under which an individual can be admitted to practice law in Paraguay. The authority in charge of the application of the Code is the Supreme Court of Justice.<sup>1</sup> The Code applies to both lawyers in private practice and in-house lawyers.</p> <p>The fees for the provision of legal services are regulated by Law No. 1.376/88<sup>2</sup>, as amended by</p>

<sup>1</sup> Please refer to the following link for more information on the Code: [https://www.pj.gov.py/descargar/ID1-60\\_id482\\_codigo\\_organizacion\\_judicial.pdf](https://www.pj.gov.py/descargar/ID1-60_id482_codigo_organizacion_judicial.pdf) (last visited on January 22, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> Please refer to the following link for more information on the Legal Fees Law: <https://www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/2444/ley-n-1376-arancel-de-honorarios-de-abogados-y-procuradores> (last visited on January 22, 2025).

	<p>Law 4.590/15<sup>3</sup> (the “<b>Legal Fees Law</b>”), which is further discussed below.</p> <p>Further, the Paraguayan Bar Association (the “<b>Bar</b>”) provides for an ethics code. However, this is only binding for members of the Bar.<sup>4</sup> The requirements for practicing law in Paraguay are governed by Article 87 et seq. of the Code. The Code sets forth the following requirements to practice law in Paraguay:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• obtaining a law degree issued by a duly acknowledged and authorized Paraguayan university (or having a foreign degree validated by the National Council of Education (“<b>CONES</b>”) and then registered with the Ministry of Education;</li> <li>• being at least 18 years old;</li> <li>• demonstrating a reputation of honour and good behaviour;</li> <li>• taking an oath before the Supreme Court of Justice; and</li> <li>• registering with the Supreme Court’s Register of Lawyers.</li> </ul> <p>Note that practitioners are not required to be members of the Bar to practice law in Paraguay.<sup>5</sup></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 Paraguay, there is no obligation for lawyers to provide pro bono legal services, and there is no specific provision under Paraguayan law that expressly allows or regulates pro bono legal services.</p> <p>To the contrary, the Legal Fees Law states that agreements/engagement letters with pro bono clients setting fees lower than those established by the Legal Fees Law are void. The Legal Fees Law states that a judge would determine the threshold of legal fees by considering the amount of the claim, the quality of the legal</p>

<sup>3</sup> Please refer to the following link for more information on the amendment: <https://www.bacn.gov.py/leyes-paraguayas/3098/ley-n-4590-modifica-los-articulos-ns-27-inciso-e-54-y-55-de-la-ley-n-137688-arancel-de-honorarios-de-abogados-y-procuradores> (last visited on January 22, 2025).

<sup>4</sup> Please refer to the following link for more information on the Bar: <https://colegiodeabogados.org.py/> (last visited on January 22, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> Please refer to the following link for more information: <https://www.pj.gov.py/contenido/1356-juramento-de-abogados-servicio-gratuito/1356> (last visited on January 22, 2025).

	<p>services, the complexity and significance of the matter and the economic gains by the client. The judge would generally apply a percentage ranging from 5% to 20% over the amount of the claim to establish this threshold. The higher the value of the claim, the lower the percentage. There are also certain processes and actions that have a fixed percentage under the Legal Fees Law.</p> <p>The Legal Fees Law also states that a partial or total waiver of legal fees is void. Pro bono engagement letters can be declared void by a judge if the pro bono lawyer claims the payment of legal fees. Therefore, under the current Paraguayan legal framework, a pro bono lawyer could claim payment of legal fees in court pursuant to the Legal Fees Law. This risk is mitigated by the professional standards and ethical commitments of Paraguay's most reputable law firms. These firms uphold the principle of providing genuine pro bono services and do not charge fees or initiate judicial claims to recover legal fees from their pro bono clients.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Lawyers do not require a license to provide pro bono legal services.</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 require any additional license to provide pro bono legal services in Paraguay. However, to practice law in Paraguay, foreign lawyers must have their foreign law degree recognized and validated by the CONES and then registered with the Ministry of Education ("<b>MEC</b>"). The process for foreign lawyers to be licensed in Paraguay involves submitting all documents in connection with their legal studies abroad duly apostilled. Once the documents have been recognized and validated by the CONES and registered with the MEC, the foreign lawyer is required to register at the Supreme Court's Register of Lawyers.</p> <p>Once this process is completed, foreign lawyers are allowed to practice law in Paraguay, including pro bono matters. Foreign lawyers cannot practice or advise in any field of law without being duly authorized to do so through the process described 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>Lawyers in Paraguay are not required 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>Aspiring lawyers in Paraguay are not required to complete a minimum number of pro bono legal services in order to become licensed lawyers.</p> <p>However, some universities in Paraguay require law students to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services in order to get their degree. For example, law students at the <i>Universidad Católica Nuestra Señora de la Asunción</i> are required to do pro bono work as part of the Legal Clinics Course (<i>Consultorio Jurídico</i>). The <i>Universidad Nacional de Asunción</i> has a legal clinic where students can voluntarily sign up to handle pro bono cases.</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>Lawyers in Paraguay are not required to meet aspirational pro bono hours targets.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Paraguay do not receive any “Continuing Legal Education” or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked.</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 organization working on the same pro bono project?</p>	<p>Lawyers in Paraguay do not require professional indemnity legal insurance cover for any pro bono legal services that they provide. There are no differences for 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>There are no rules in Paraguay that prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients.</p> <p>However, lawyers are subject to the general restrictions on professional publicity set out in</p>

	<p>the Code of Ethics for Lawyers issued by the Bar Association of Paraguay (<i>Colegio de Abogados del Paraguay</i>). These rules require that any advertising be discreet, truthful, and consistent with the dignity of the profession, and prohibit misleading or comparative statements as well as undue client solicitation. Consequently, these restrictions would equally apply to any communication or publicity relating to pro bono work.</p>
<p><b>Pro bono practice and culture</b></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 which require the provision of pro bono legal services are: (i) Family Law; (ii) Criminal Law (including cases of violence against women and children); (iii) Labour Law; and (iv) Corporate Law.</p> <p>There is a clear consensus amongst Paraguayan lawyers and the Paraguayan government that there is a significant shortfall in the provision of public legal aid services since there are not enough public defenders to meet the demands of individuals with limited economic resources and to ensure access to justice.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p><b>1. CIDSEP</b> The <i>Centro Interdisciplinario de Derecho Social y Economía Política</i> of the <i>Universidad Católica</i> (“CIDSEP”) in association with the Bar, is Paraguay’s leading clearinghouse for pro bono work. CIDSEP is currently working with six major law firms and approximately 60 independent lawyers. CIDSEP notifies practitioners when pro bono work becomes available giving due consideration to the area in which the practitioner is involved.<sup>6</sup></p> <p><b>2. International Red Pro Bono<sup>7</sup></b> International Red Pro Bono is a foundation that assists and organizes pro bono legal services for lawyers and law firms. The foundation was created in 2000 and since then it has implemented work programs to provide</p>

<sup>6</sup> Please refer to the CIDSEP’s social media accounts for more information: <https://www.instagram.com/cidsepuc/?hl=es-la>, [https://www.facebook.com/cidsepUC/?locale=es\\_LA](https://www.facebook.com/cidsepUC/?locale=es_LA) and <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQWWhaSG2EhHhT9ibtXowzw> (last visited on October 2, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> See <http://redprobono.org/> (last visited on January 22, 2025)

	<p>opportunities for attorneys to get involved in pro bono opportunities. The foundation facilitates pro bono legal services across various areas, including corporate advice, dispute advice, legal reports and judicial representation to improve access to free justice in Paraguay.</p> <p><b>3. Universidad Católica<sup>8</sup></b> Law students at the Catholic University of Asunción are required to do pro bono work as part of the Legal Clinics Course (<i>Consultorio Jurídico</i>) (as mentioned above).</p> <p><b>4. Universidad Nacional de Asunción<sup>9</sup></b> In 2017, the Legal Clinic (<i>Consultorio Jurídico</i>) was established with the purpose of providing free legal assistance to individuals with limited financial resources; while offering law students valuable practical experience in serving the community.<sup>10</sup></p> <p><b>5. Law Firms Pro Bono programs</b> A few private law firms in Paraguay have pro bono programs in place. For example, FERRERE Abogados, Vinclum Abogados &amp; Consultores, Berkemeyer, and Gross Brown are among the firms that have such initiatives in place.</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>We are not aware of any application of innovative technology or artificial intelligence to enable access to pro bono.</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><b>1. CIDSEP</b> The <i>Centro Interdisciplinario de Derecho Social y Economía Política of the Universidad Católica</i> (“CIDSEP”) in association with the Bar, is Paraguay’s leading clearinghouse for pro bono work. CIDSEP is currently working with six major law firms and approximately 60 independent lawyers. CIDSEP notifies practitioners when pro bono work becomes available giving due consideration to the area in which the practitioner</p>

<sup>8</sup> See <https://www.universidadcatolica.edu.py/> (last visited on January 22, 2025)

<sup>9</sup> See <https://www.una.py/> (last visited on January 22, 2025)

<sup>10</sup> See <https://www.der.una.py/index.php/extension/consultorio-juridico/antecedentes> (last visited on January 22, 2025)

	<p>is involved.<sup>11</sup></p> <p><b>2. International Red Pro Bono<sup>12</sup></b> International Red Pro Bono is a foundation that assists and organizes pro bono legal services for lawyers and law firms. The foundation was created in 2000 and since then it has implemented work programs to provide opportunities for attorneys to get involved in pro bono opportunities. The foundation facilitates pro bono legal services across various areas, including corporate advice, dispute advice, legal reports and judicial representation to improve access to free justice in Paraguay.</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><b>CIDSEP</b> As discussed above, CIDSEP is a clearinghouse for pro bono work. Contact details for CIDSEP are as follows:</p> <p>Address: Alberdi 855 casi Piribebuy, Paraguay Phone: (595 21) 445429 Email: <a href="mailto:cidsep@uc.edu.py">cidsep@uc.edu.py</a></p> <p><b>International Red Pro Bono<sup>13</sup></b> As mentioned above, the foundation has implemented work programs to provide opportunities for attorneys to get involved in pro bono opportunities. The foundation facilitates pro bono services across various areas, including corporate advice, dispute advice, legal reports and judicial representation to improve access to free justice in Paraguay.</p> <p>Address: Mariano Sánchez Fontecilla N° 370 Las Condes – Santiago de Chile Phone: (562 38) 156 60 Email: <a href="mailto:contacto@redprobono.org">contacto@redprobono.org</a></p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>There are no national awards, lists, or rankings specifically related to pro bono work in Paraguay. However, there are international recognitions for pro bono practice by country, such as Latin Lawyer Pro Bono Leading Lights<sup>14</sup>.</p>

<sup>11</sup> Please refer to the CIDSEP's social media accounts for more information: <https://www.instagram.com/cidsepuc/?hl=es-la>, [https://www.facebook.com/cidsepUC/?locale=es\\_LA](https://www.facebook.com/cidsepUC/?locale=es_LA) and <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQWWhaSG2EhHhT9ibtIXowzw> (last visited on October 2, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> See <http://redprobono.org/> (last visited on January 22, 2025).

<sup>13</sup> See <http://redprobono.org/> (last visited on January 22, 2025).

<sup>14</sup> See <https://latinlawyer.com/survey/pro-bono/2024/article/pro-bono-leading-lights> (last visited on January 22, 2025).

## Acknowledgements

Name of law firm: Ferrere Abogados

Name of lawyer: Carlos Vasconsellos, Claudia Arietti, Marcelo Rodriguez and Sofia Rattazzi

## Learn more

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