

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Saudi Arabia

Introduction

While Saudi Arabia does not yet have an established and formalised pro bono culture, individual attorneys in Saudi Arabia often provide pro bono legal services on an informal basis. Law firms with offices in the Middle East have, however, started to regularly discuss the practice of pro bono in Saudi Arabia and the MENA region in general, and have indicated an openness to collaborating on pro bono matters, despite limited opportunities.¹ Pro bono participation is typically seen via private practice law firms or through individual collaboration with non-governmental organisations either directly or via referral organisations such as the Saudi Bar Association (SBA) or the Ministry of Justice. As the legal profession continues to mature in Saudi Arabia, it is expected that pro bono legal services will become more institutionalised and better regulated.

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	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>A person may not provide legal services to another person unless registered or licensed to do so by the SBA.</p> <p><u>Saudi Nationals</u> Persons applying for such a license must hold a law degree, have completed a minimum number of years of legal training, reside in Saudi Arabia, and have no criminal records in the past five years. The minimum years of legal training depend on the licensee's degree. Applicants who hold a bachelor's degree must have completed a minimum of two years of legal training, while applicants who hold a master's degree must</p>

¹ <https://www.arablawyersassociation.co.uk/post/the-future-of-pro-bono-in-the-middle-east-a-call-to-action> (Last viewed on 21 January 2026).

	<p>complete a minimum of one year of legal training. Applicants who hold a doctorate degree are exempted from the legal training requirements.</p> <p><u>Foreign Lawyers</u></p> <p>In order for foreign legal consultants to be registered with the SBA to practice law in Saudi Arabia, they must satisfy the aforementioned requirements for obtaining a licence to practice law or be licensed to practice law under a foreign law and have a minimum of five years of legal experience. Registered foreign legal consultants may provide legal advice, but they may not plead before courts and judicial committees.</p> <p><u>In-house Lawyers</u></p> <p>In-house counsel are not required to obtain a licence from or register with the SBA, unless they intend to represent their employer before courts or judicial committees. Persons applying for registration as in-house counsel must hold a law degree and submit proof of employment.²</p>
Regulatory landscape for pro bono	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>The SBA-issued Legal Clinics Regulations³ are the only pro-bono-related regulations that regulate the licensing of universities, institutes, and non-profit organisations who wish to provide pro bono legal services. These services would be provided by Law and <i>Sharia</i>'a students under the supervision of a council of SBA-qualified lawyers who have the necessary experience.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>No, there are no requirements beyond the required qualification to practise law as stated above.</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>No, there are no requirements beyond the required qualification to practice law as stated above.</p>

² See the Code of Law Practice promulgated under Royal Decree No. M/38 dated 15/10/2001, as amended.

(<https://www.moj.gov.sa/English/Ministry/Departments/Mohammah/Pages/legalSystem.aspx>, last accessed 27 February 2025).

³ See the Legal Clinics Regulations, dated 03/01/2022. (<https://sba.gov.sa/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/%D9%84%D8%A7%D8%A6%D8%AD%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%B9%D9%8A%D8%A7%D8%AF%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%82%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%88%D9%86%D9%8A%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%B5%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B1-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%AB%D8%A7%D9%86%D9%8A.pdf>, last accessed 27 February 2025).

<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?</p>	<p>No, although by analogy, the Judicial Aid Guide issued by the SBA states that every lawyer is encouraged to provide 12 hours of judicial (legal) aid services per year.⁴</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>No.</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>No, although note the analogous 12 hours under the Judicial Aid Guide.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>No.</p> <p>However, according to the Judicial Aid Guide, any lawyer providing judicial (legal) aid services shall receive a written statement that confirms his assistance in providing judicial (legal) aid services, the hours spent shall be recorded in the SBA Lawyers Register, and the lawyer with the most hours of judicial (legal) aid shall be awarded a certificate and a plaque in addition to a national award.</p>
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>No.</p> <p>Only foreign law firms licensed to practice in Saudi Arabia are required to obtain professional indemnity legal insurance (but not specific to pro bono legal services).</p> <p>Local law firms, and individual lawyers, whether working in-house or in law firms (both local and international), are not required to obtain professional indemnity legal 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>No.</p>

⁴ See the Judicial Aid Guide, dated 2018. (<https://sba.gov.sa/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/legal-aid-bylaw.pdf>, link not working).

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>According to the Judicial Aid Guide, judicial aid services may be provided in three main areas of law, judicial (legal) aid in criminal law cases conditional on the SBA's review and approval of the case, judicial (legal) aid in legal status cases mentioned in the Law of Civil Procedures (including but not limited to: cases relating to marriage, divorce inheritance, and guardianship), and judicial (legal) aid in civil law cases that do not fall under the jurisdiction of the criminal or legal status courts. For the avoidance of doubt, the above does not apply to pro bono legal services but may act as a guide.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>The main providers of pro bono legal services in Saudi Arabia are (1) legal clinics in universities, institutes, and non-profit organisations; and (2) lawyers on an informal basis.</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>There is an option to hold court hearings via video conference, which is available for all cases, including pro bono. Furthermore, video conferences may be used for the provision of pro bono legal advisory and services.</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>The Saudi Bar Association is the main source of pro bono and judicial (legal) aid services through its regulation of legal clinics and the establishment of its judicial (legal) aid program.</p> <p>SBA has an electronic platform where any lawyer interested in providing judicial (legal) aid services may register and their names would be put on a list, and the SBA would contact them if any judicial (legal) aid opportunities arise.</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>Yes, the Judicial Aid Platform by the SBA enables Saudi licensed lawyers to register as a legal aid provider. This opportunity is not available to foreign lawyers or in-house lawyers.</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>According to the Judicial Aid Guide, any lawyer providing judicial (legal) aid services shall receive a written statement that confirms his assistance</p>

in providing judicial (legal) aid services, the hours spent shall be recorded in the SBA Lawyers Register, and the lawyer with the most hours of judicial (legal) aid shall be awarded a certificate and a plaque in addition to a national award.

Moreover, on a regional level, there are the following awards:

- Pro Bono Firm of the Year at the IFLR Middle East Awards; and
- Pro Bono Initiative of the Year at The Lawyer Awards.

Acknowledgements

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Learn more

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