

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Serbia

Introduction

Serbia does not have a long-standing tradition of pro bono work in its conventional form, and the same could be said for the regulation of pro bono services. However, in recent years, efforts of law firms, combined with the support of NGOs, offer potential for the growth of a legal community that embraces pro bono work as an integral part of the legal profession. Additionally, the government has taken significant steps by sponsoring the adoption of the Free Legal Aid Act, which came into effect on 1 October 2019. Pro bono work remains largely unregulated and is primarily dependent on the discretion and voluntary engagement of private attorneys who independently embrace this practice.

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	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

The landscape

Professional regulation	
<p>1. 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>	<p>The Legal Profession Act of 2011 (LPA¹) is the main Act regulating the provision of legal services in Serbia.</p> <p>The Serbian Bar Association, as the main regulatory body, oversees all attorneys in the country regarding the delivery of legal services. All attorneys in Serbia are required to be members of this association, which is automatically granted upon joining one of the nine regional Bar Associations in Serbia.</p> <p>Additionally, a lawyer in Serbia may work as an in-house counsel without being a member of the Serbian Bar Association, but in this case, they are only allowed to provide legal services to their employer and cannot offer services to external</p>

¹ Please see: <https://aks.org.rs/aks/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Legal-Profession-Act-.pdf>.

	<p>clients.²</p> <p>Prerequisites for admission to practise as an attorney in Serbia include familiar requirements, where an individual must have:³</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A completed law faculty diploma; • A certificate confirming that the bar exam has been passed; and • A court certificate stating that no criminal or investigative proceedings (or similar) are being conducted.
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>While there are no specific regulations governing the provision of pro bono legal services, it is important to note that certain actions interpreted as pro bono work may be considered a violation of the Code of Professional Ethics of Attorneys (the Code).</p> <p>For instance, the Tariff on Fees and Expenses Payable for Attorneys' Work (last amended 2023) (the Tariff⁴) sets mandatory or minimum fees for legal services and provides that attracting clients by offering free legal services or services at fees below those specified in the Tariff is regarded as unfair competition and is therefore prohibited by the Code of Professional Ethics of Attorneys. This rule applies even if legal work is not commercial in nature but is, in fact, pro bono.</p> <p>While there are some limited circumstances in which attorneys provide pro bono services by working in-house at legal clinics or similar pro bono organisations, in most cases, individuals in need of free legal assistance turn to mechanisms prescribed by the Free Legal Aid Act. This Act establishes a separate framework for the provision of free legal aid, which, while not subject to the restrictions imposed by the Tariff or the Code, is distinct from pro bono practice</p>

² https://www.trust.org/impact-story/solo-nature-of-legal-work-in-serbia-hinders-pro-bono-progress/?utm_ (Last viewed on 20 January 2026).

³ Please see: [advokati-2024.pdf](#).

⁴ Please see: https://www.paragraf.rs/propisi/tarifa_o_nagradama_i_naknadama_troskova_za_rad_advokata.html.

	and is therefore outside the scope of this guide.
3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?	By admission to the Serbian Bar Association, an attorney is authorised to provide all types of legal aid in Serbia, and there are no additional specialist licences required to provide pro bono legal services.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	<p>Foreign attorneys do not need any special licences to provide pro bono legal services.</p> <p>Under the Serbian Attorney's Act,⁵ a foreign lawyer may become registered with the Serbian Bar Association and practice law in Serbia, provided they meet certain conditions, including, among other things, that they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit proof of their admission and ongoing permission to practise in their home jurisdiction; • Submit proof of citizenship; • Submit certified translations of the above; and • Fulfil certain other professional and legal requirements as outlined in the Act. <p>If a foreign lawyer satisfies the local registration requirements and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passes the Serbian judicial and bar exam, they will be permitted to practise Serbian law, as well as international law or the laws of their home jurisdiction. • Does not pass the Serbian judicial and bar exam, they will be permitted to practise international law or the laws of their home jurisdiction, but not Serbian law.
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	Attorneys in Serbia are not obligated to complete a minimum number of pro bono hours.

⁵ Act on Attorney's ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia ", No. 31/2011 and 24/2012 - Decision of the Constitutional Court).

<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 Serbia, aspiring attorneys are not required to complete a minimum number of pro bono hours to become an attorney.</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>Yes, the Serbian Bar Association has set an aspirational target of 50 pro bono hours per year for lawyers, although it is not a mandatory requirement.⁶</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>The Serbian Bar Association organises CLE; however, attendance is not mandatory for attorneys. Engaging in pro bono activities does not provide any benefits in relation to attending this education, nor is it a requirement for participation.</p>
<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 are required by the LPA to carry mandatory professional indemnity insurance policy as a condition to maintaining the operation of their practices. This coverage also extends to any pro bono legal services they provide. The requirement applies equally to in-house lawyers.</p> <p>The requirement to maintain mandatory insurance coverage still applies if the lawyer is working in partnership with a private law firm or an organisation on the same project.</p>
<p>10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?</p>	<p>The Serbian Bar Association prohibits advertising or self-promotion by Serbian attorneys through its bylaws, in accordance with Serbian law, although it doesn’t apply to electronic communication, basic contact information, or printed materials that can be shared with clients.</p> <p>This distinction has created a “grey” area, with no clear guidelines on certain forms of communication, creating ambiguity in practice.</p> <p>While no specific restrictions apply to advertising pro bono services, the general limitations on advertising across all legal practice areas still apply.</p>

⁶ World Bank Multi-Donor Trust Fund for Justice Sector Support, SERBIAN FREE LEGAL AID FISCAL IMPACT ANALYSIS: VOLUME, COSTS AND ALTERNATIVES, (2013), available at [Documents & Reports - All Documents | The World Bank](#).

<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 that require or present opportunities for pro bono services in Serbia are those related to refugees, displaced persons, and human trafficking.</p> <p>Furthermore, there are notable gaps in addressing the legal needs of vulnerable groups and minorities, including economically disadvantaged individuals, victims of domestic violence, and patient advocacy groups.</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>In Serbia, the main providers of pro bono legal services are a combination of law firms and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Many NGOs focus on assisting refugees, displaced persons, and victims of human trafficking.</p> <p>In addition, several law schools across the country also operate legal clinics offering pro bono legal support. These include the law faculties at the Universities of Niš,⁷ Belgrade,⁸ Novi Sad,⁹ Kragujevac,¹⁰ and University Union.¹¹</p> <p>Serbia has a relatively low ratio of attorneys in its overall population, with only about 8,500 attorneys, translating to roughly one attorney for every 800 citizens, which further limits the availability of pro bono services. Additionally, most attorneys in Serbia work as solo practitioners, limiting their ability to dedicate time and resources to pro bono work.</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 Serbia, the use of technology and AI in pro bono work is still developing. Some law firms and NGOs use AI tools for legal research to make case preparation more efficient.</p> <p>Additionally, online platforms offering free legal advice help people access legal support, particularly for vulnerable groups such as refugees and victims of trafficking.</p>

⁷ Please see: <https://www.prafak.ni.ac.rs/en/>.

⁸ Please see: <https://www1.ius.bg.ac.rs/>.

⁹ Please see: <https://pf.uns.ac.rs/sr/>.

¹⁰ Please see: <https://www.jura.kg.ac.rs/>.

¹¹ Please see: <https://en.pravnifakultet.edu.rs/>.

	<p>While the use of technology for pro bono services is still in its early stages, technology has the potential to expand the reach of pro bono services.</p>
<p>14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.</p>	<p>There are no public sector resources available for pro bono or other legal services in this jurisdiction.</p> <p>Below are the main NGOs providing services or information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ASTRA¹² • Asylum Protection Center/Center for Protection and Asylum¹³ • Autonomous Women’s Center¹⁴ • Belgrade Center for Human Rights¹⁵ • Child’s Rights Center¹⁶ • Civic Initiatives¹⁷ • Group 484¹⁸ • Initiative for Development and Cooperation (IDC) Serbia¹⁹ • International Aid Network²⁰ • MPDL SE EUROPE²¹

¹² Please see: <https://astra.rs/>.

¹³ Please see: <https://www.apc-cza.org/sr-YU/>.

¹⁴ Please see: <https://www.womenngo.org.rs/>.

¹⁵ Please see: <https://www.bgcentar.org.rs/bgcentar/eng-lat/>.

¹⁶ Please see: <https://cpd.org.rs/?lang=en>.

¹⁷ Please see: <https://www.gradjanske.org/>.

¹⁸ Please see: <https://www.grupa484.org.rs/>.

¹⁹ Please see: <https://idcserbia.org/>.

²⁰ Please see: <https://ian.org.rs/>.

²¹ Please see: <https://www.mpd.org/>.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Novi Sad Humanitarian Centre²² • Praxis²³ • Welcome to Europe (note this is European-wide and not limited to Serbia)²⁴ • Humanitarian Center for Integration and Tolerance²⁵ • Helsinki Committee for Human Rights in Serbia²⁶
<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>There are no public or private organisations in Serbia where local or foreign lawyers can register to receive notifications about pro bono opportunities.</p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>Currently, there are no widely recognised awards, lists, or rankings specifically dedicated to pro bono work in Serbia.</p> <p>While pro bono services are encouraged, there is no formal system in place that highlights or ranks the contributions of law firms or individual lawyers in this area.</p> <p>However, some NGOs and legal organizations may acknowledge outstanding pro bono work informally or through specific projects, but these efforts are not typically part of an official ranking or award system.</p>

Acknowledgements

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Name of lawyer(s): Ognjen Colić, Marko Jović, Aleksa Stojanović

Learn more

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

²² Please see: <https://nshc.org.rs/>.

²³ Please see: <https://www.praxis.org.rs/index.php/en/>.

²⁴ Please see: <https://w2eu.info/en>.

²⁵ Please see: <https://hcrit.rs/>.

²⁶ Please see: <https://www.helsinki.org.rs/index.html>.