

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Sweden

Introduction

With a comprehensive system of subsidised legal services in place, there has historically been little need for lawyers to provide free legal services in Sweden. However, funding cuts within the state welfare system in recent years have led to the slow emergence of a pro bono culture, with the biggest law firms having increased pro bono work in recent years. The pro bono work in Sweden mainly consists of various social initiatives, such as projects related to human rights, the environment, and the environmental impact and children's rights.

One of the most well-known pro bono projects for lawyers in Sweden is "Advokatjouren", which was started by the Swedish Bar Association and offers free, 15-minute legal consulting sessions to the public.

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	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>Under the Swedish Code of Judicial Procedure (Sw. <i>Rättegångsbalken</i>), a lawyer is required to act in accordance with the Rules of Professional Conduct, which are a codification of the practices established by the Board of the Swedish Bar Association (Sw. <i>Sveriges Advokatsamfund</i>) and the precedents of the Bar Association's disciplinary committee (Sw. <i>Advokatsamfundets disciplinnämnd</i>). The Rules of Professional Conduct require, amongst other things, that lawyers must perform any assignment with professionalism and due care.¹</p>

¹ The Code of Professional Conduct, available at https://www.advokatsamfundet.com/globalassets/advokatsamfundet_eng/code-of-professional-conduct-swedish-bar-association-2024.pdf (last visited on 9 January 2025).

	<p>In Sweden, any person may practise law, but only members of the Swedish Bar Association can use the title "advokat". In-house counsel are not permitted to be members of the Bar and are therefore not governed by the Rules of Professional Conduct or the Swedish Bar Association's rules. Therefore, in-house counsel can offer legal services as they wish, subject to their employer's view and applicable employment agreements.²</p>
<p>Regulatory landscape for pro bono</p>	
<p>2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.</p>	<p>There are no specific rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services in Sweden. Members of the Swedish Bar Association are not required to provide pro bono services, but in practice, many lawyers do undertake pro bono work on a regular basis. When doing so, a regular attorney-client relationship is established, and the ethical rules for barred attorneys apply. In-house attorneys are not governed by the rules and regulations of the Swedish Bar Association and can therefore offer pro bono legal services as they wish.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>No, in Sweden, any person may practise law and offer pro bono legal services to the public without the need for an authorisation. Any person is permitted to appear before any court, at any level of the court system, representing himself/herself or another person.³ In-house lawyers are therefore able to offer legal services to pro bono clients and represent pro bono clients in court. However, the members of the Swedish Bar Association have an exclusive right to offer legal advice under the professional title "advokat".</p> <p>When representing someone in court proceedings (Sw. <i>Rättegångsombud</i>), the Swedish Code of Judicial Procedure includes general requirements stating that the person</p>

² The Swedish Bar Association, Some Salient Features of the Legal Profession in Sweden, available at https://www.advokatsamfundet.com/globalassets/advokatsamfundet_eng/from-scandinavian-studies-of-law.pdf (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³ The Swedish Bar Association, Some Salient Features of the Legal Profession in Sweden, available at https://www.advokatsamfundet.com/globalassets/advokatsamfundet_eng/from-scandinavian-studies-of-law.pdf (last visited on 9 January 2025).

	<p>must be deemed suitable based on integrity, competence, and previous experience and must also possess proficiency in the Swedish language.⁴ The person must also be resident in Sweden or in another state of the European Economic Area (or in Switzerland). However, if the court considers it appropriate, taking into account the circumstances of the case, a person outside the European Union may be appointed as the legal representative.</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>Under Swedish law, foreign-qualified lawyers are allowed to offer legal services, including pro bono work, given that any person is allowed to practise law. However, as stated above, only members of the Swedish Bar Association may use the professional title advokat, and thus, a foreign-qualified lawyer should not hold themselves out as being qualified in Sweden.</p> <p>As stated above, if a foreign-qualified lawyer wants to represent someone in court proceedings, the person must also be proficient in the Swedish language and be suitable based on integrity, competence, and previous experience.</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 Sweden are not required by the rules that govern them 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 Sweden are not required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become members of the Swedish Bar Association.</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 Sweden are not required by the rules that govern them to work a minimum number of pro bono hours.</p>
<p>8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?</p>	<p>Lawyers, including in-house counsel, do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked. However, all members of the</p>

⁴ The Swedish Code of Judicial Procedure, available at https://www.government.se/contentassets/a1be9e99a5c64d1bb93a96ce5d517e9c/the-swedish-code-of-judicial-procedure-ds-1998_65.pdf (last visited on 17 January 2025)

	<p>Swedish Bar Association are required to complete annual legal education and report it to the Bar Association. While this education is not specifically focused on pro bono legal services, it can cover any area of law.</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>In Sweden, members of the Swedish Bar Association are required to maintain professional indemnity insurance for all legal services they provide, including pro bono work. This ensures that all services rendered under the professional title <i>advokat</i> are covered by indemnity insurance.</p> <p>In contrast, in-house counsel in Sweden are not permitted to join the Swedish Bar Association and, therefore, are not subject to the same insurance requirements. While it is not mandatory for in-house lawyers to have professional indemnity insurance for pro bono services, obtaining such coverage is advisable and may depend on the employer's policies.</p> <p>In summary, while Swedish Bar Association members must have indemnity insurance for all legal services, including pro bono legal services, in-house counsel are not obligated to maintain such insurance for pro bono activities. However, securing appropriate coverage is recommended to mitigate potential risks.</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 explicit rules in Sweden that prohibit advertising successes in pro bono matters or soliciting new pro bono clients, which applies to in-house counsel as well. However, members of the Swedish Bar Association must always comply with the general ethical rules (including attorney-client privilege and confidentiality) also with respect to pro bono clients.</p>
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>The pro bono work in Sweden mainly consists of various social initiatives, such as projects related to human rights, the environment, and children's rights. The pro bono work can also consist of supporting sports teams and start-ups.</p>

<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>Advocates and law firms engage in pro bono legal services on a case-by-case basis, typically either when contacted directly by individuals needing assistance or by partnering with a non-profit organisation for discrete or long-term projects.</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 are no technological innovations designed specifically for pro bono legal services in Sweden. However, Sweden is generally at the forefront in fields like artificial intelligence. These technologies are often utilised by Swedish law firms, including in their pro bono legal services.</p> <p>For example, many law firms use Legora (formerly Leya), which was founded in Sweden in 2023, including in providing pro bono legal services. Legora is an AI-powered platform, which is designed to facilitate collaboration between lawyers and assist in project management.</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>There are no governmental sources of pro bono and a lack of systematised pro bono clearinghouses to facilitate pro bono relationships in Sweden. (Note: government-funded legal aid exists separately from pro bono). As such, pro bono work is mainly undertaken by private initiative.</p> <p>One of the most well-known pro bono projects in Sweden is “Advokatjouren”, an initiative by the Swedish Bar Association that offers free legal consulting for 15 minutes to the public. This service provides advice on how to proceed with legal issues but does not include document drafting. Meetings are available in several cities across Sweden.⁵</p> <p>Another example is the public interest organisation Center for Justice (Sw. <i>Centrum för rättvisa</i>), which among other things takes on pilot cases within the field of human rights litigation. The organisation has been behind several</p>
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⁵ See <https://www.advokatsamfundet.se/Anlita-en-advokat/Advokatjouren/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).

	landmark rulings in the Swedish Supreme Court. ⁶
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?	There is no Swedish public or private organisation where local or foreign lawyers can register to get information about pro bono opportunities.
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	There are no Swedish awards, lists, or rankings for pro bono work.

Acknowledgements

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Name of lawyers: Rasmus Lyckhammar and Nils Ivars

Learn more

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

⁶ See <https://centrumforrattvisa.se/> (last visited on 17 January 2025).