

Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Thailand

Introduction

Pro bono legal services in Thailand are not widely offered and there are a small number of lawyers at private law firms participating in a few pro bono opportunities referred to them by non-profit organisations. Foreign lawyers wishing to provide pro bono legal services in Thailand face additional obstacles such as language and cultural barriers as well as barriers to practicing law in the country.

According to TrustLaw's most recent Index of Pro Bono, Thailand has seen a notable rise in average pro bono hours and engagement amongst law firms. More firms are also reporting formalisation of their pro bono through adoption of infrastructure, which also indicates growing attention to pro bono.¹ However, there is still a wide gap between the need for pro bono assistance and responsibility being taken individually and collectively by legal practitioners in meeting those needs. This shortfall can be attributed to the fact that the rendering of pro bono legal services has generally been dependent on the goodwill and social conscience of a few practitioners.

With an increasing number of university students engaging in pro bono activities arranged by university pro bono clubs, there has been a steady progress in pro bono legal services in Thailand. It is expected that university students will play key roles in pro bono legal services in Thailand, bridging the language and culture gap between foreign lawyers and local pro bono clients.

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	Yes	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 legal sector in Thailand is governed by the Thailand Lawyers Act B.E. 2528 (1985), which primarily focuses on the Lawyers' Council of Thailand, requirements for being admitted as a lawyer, good practices of lawyers and the ethical</p>

¹ https://www.trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-TrustLaw-Index-of-Pro-Bono.pdf?utm_ (Last viewed on 22 February 2026).

	<p>conduct of lawyers.²</p> <p>Thai nationals, with or without a law degree, can offer legal advice. However, only lawyers accredited with the Lawyers' Council of Thailand are licensed to provide legal advice to a client and represent a client in a court of law in Thailand. These licences are restricted to Thai nationals with appropriate qualifications and training, who must adhere to professional ethics and the Lawyers' Council of Thailand's code of conduct. To obtain a lawyer's licence, a candidate must: (i) graduate with a bachelor's degree or an associate degree in law or an equivalent certificate in law from an institution accredited by the Lawyers Council of Thailand; and (ii) complete a training course by the Institute of Law Practice Training of the Lawyers Council of Thailand, divided into two terms. The first term involves coursework in case conduct theory and professional ethics, followed by a written exam. The second term requires six months of practice in a qualified law office. These requirements apply to in-house counsel as well.</p> <p>Foreign nationals, regardless of their qualifications and licences to practice in other countries are not permitted to provide advice or represent their clients within the Thai legal jurisdiction but can obtain a work permit entitling them to offer advisory services in foreign and international law (i.e., become a foreign legal consultant).</p> <p>The Lawyers' Council of Thailand and the Thai Bar Association are responsible for regulating those lawyers who are their members. The main duties of the Lawyers Council are to register and issue licences to applicant lawyers. The Lawyers Council also produces rules on legal ethics and oversees the general conduct of attorneys.</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 Thailand has no specific rules or regulations that regulate Thai or foreign lawyers providing pro bono legal services, pro bono legal services are mainly encouraged by government</p>

² See Lawyers Acts, B.E. 2528 (1985) (Unofficial Translation), at <https://www.ocs.go.th/aec16680-bd65-479f-a80e-9ff2b4e95276> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

	<p>agencies, such as the Government Attorney Office. However, several limitations hinder the development of a mature pro bono practice in Thailand.</p> <p>First, apart from a few volunteer organisations, there is a lack of pro bono referral organisations in Thailand. Referrals are mostly done on an ad hoc basis and in an uncoordinated manner, primarily through NGO networks.</p> <p>Second, only a small number of law firms in Thailand have developed regular pro bono initiatives. While some law firms organise occasional community outreach activities and donate time and money to charitable causes, few encourage their lawyers to provide pro bono legal services on a consistent basis. In addition, there appears to be a lack of incentives³ for associates to engage in pro bono work, as they typically receive no billing credit, nor is it counted towards annual billable requirements.</p> <p>Third, foreign lawyers in Thailand face obstacles that prevent active participation in the legal community. These include not only language and cultural barriers, but also legal barriers and restrictions against foreign practitioners, such as the Thailand Lawyers Act 1985, which requires Thai citizenship for an applicant to receive a lawyer's licence.</p> <p>Lastly, the legal services for those in poor rural areas, who may be most in need of legal assistance, primarily depend on professionals volunteering their pro bono services through the government functions.</p>
<p>3. Do lawyers need a license to provide pro bono legal services (beyond usual local qualification to practice law)?</p>	<p>Thailand has no specific regulations that regulate Thai or foreign lawyers providing pro bono legal services. Also, there is no restriction on offering such legal advice. However, only lawyers with licences obtained from the Lawyers' Council of Thailand are permitted to provide legal advice and represent another party in a Thai Court.</p> <p>A volunteer providing pro bono legal services is not required to have obtained any licence or permission unless such services include</p>

³ https://aichr.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/AICHR-Thematic-Study-on-Legal-Aid-for-web.pdf?utm_ (Last viewed on 22 February 2026).

	representation in a Thai Court.
4. Do foreign-qualified lawyers need any additional license to provide pro bono services (beyond their foreign qualification to practice law)?	Subject to limitation on providing Thai law legal services, foreign lawyers who wish to provide pro bono legal services in Thailand are not required to have obtained any licence or permission; however, they cannot represent another party in a Thai court.
5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?	There is no mandatory pro bono target in Thailand to maintain a lawyer's licence or the bar membership status. ⁴
6. Are aspiring lawyers required to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services to become licensed lawyers?	There are currently no requirements for aspiring lawyers to complete a minimum number of hours of pro bono legal services in order to become licensed lawyers in Thailand.
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?	The Thai Bar Association, the Lawyers Council of Thailand, and other bodies have not established aspirational pro bono targets for lawyers.
8. Do lawyers receive any "Continuing Legal Education" (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	There is no CLE or equivalent credit given to lawyers for pro bono hours worked in Thailand.
Insurance and advertising	
9. Do lawyers need professional indemnity legal insurance cover for pro bono legal services they provide? Does the requirement differ for in-house lawyers? 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?	In Thailand, there is no requirement for law firms or in-house lawyers to have professional indemnity insurance for providing pro bono legal services.
10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?	Clause 17 of the Lawyers Council's Regulation on Lawyers Ethic B.E. 2529 (1986) prohibits licensed lawyers from announcing or advertising that they

⁴ See Building Pro Bono Culture in Thailand's Legal Business as a Contribution to Sustainable Development, Pavitra Sakulchaimongkol June 4, 2018, Faculty of Law, Thammasat University at <https://www.tci-thaijo.org/index.php/TBLJ/article/view/126891/95826> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

	offer legal services for free. However, there do not appear to be specific restrictions on advertising pro bono successes after the fact or soliciting pro bono clients through other means. ⁵
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 lack of access to justice is still very much evident in Thailand. The majority of people in Thailand often have very limited access to the legal system because of insufficient resources. While various governmental and non-governmental organisations attempt to address and tackle these issues, a wide range of individuals and organisations cannot afford legal services because of the prohibitive financial consequences of using them.</p> <p>The following are the main areas of law that require the provision of pro bono legal services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Rights and justice-related issues; • Asylum and Refugee Assistance; • Women’s issues; • Children’s Rights issues; • Labour and Employment issues; • Consumer Protection; • Medical malpractice liabilities; and • LGBT Rights recognition and protection. <p>The poor and vulnerable in Thai society, including the demographics mentioned above (e.g., asylum seekers, refugees, women, and children), have difficulties in accessing the justice system due to a lack of knowledge or information, which is one of the major obstacles.</p> <p>Like other developing countries, there is still a wide gap between laws and regulations in Thailand’s legal framework and the enforcement of such laws and regulations.</p> <p>TrustLaw’s latest Index of Pro Bono indicated that the key focus areas for pro bono identified by responding firms in Thailand were access to</p>

⁵ See Building Pro Bono Culture in Thailand’s Legal Business as a Contribution to Sustainable Development, Pavitra Sakulchaimongkol 2016, Faculty of Law, Thammasat University at https://digital.library.tu.ac.th/tu_dc/frontend/info/item/dc:91428 (last visited on 9 January 2025).

	<p>justice (58 percent), immigration, refugees and asylum (50 percent), and ethnic/minority rights and racial justice (25 percent).⁶</p>
<p>12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?</p>	<p>Pro bono legal services in Thailand are mainly provided by Thai bar associations, NGOs, law firms, and universities' legal clinics.</p> <p>Several law firms in Thailand have been engaged in various pro bono programs. For instance, some Thai branches of international law firms engage in pro bono projects in Thailand when local pro bono clients are referred from the firm's headquarters to its local branches. Also, some local Thai firms have pro bono programs and invite their lawyers to participate on a voluntary basis. Many of the law firm pro bono programs in Thailand involve providing legal assistance to charitable organisations, non-profit organisations and individuals, with a focus on human rights issues. Examples include Capital Law;⁷ H&P Herrera and Partners - Pro bono;⁸ Lanna Lawyers - Pro Bono Services;⁹ Tilleke & Gibbins - Pro Bono;¹⁰ Anglo Thai Legal;¹¹ Thanathip&Partners - CSR and Pro bono.¹²</p> <p>Despite the generally low level of pro bono opportunities in Thailand, there are some pro bono legal services offered by non-profit organisations. For example, the Thai Volunteer Service Foundation maintains a website providing a list of volunteer opportunities for lawyers. Many of the local non-profit websites are only available in the Thai language.¹³</p> <p>A few NGOs are also developing pro bono aid clinics. For instance, Bridges Across Borders Southeast Asia Community Legal Education Initiative (BABSEA CLE)¹⁴ has been working in collaboration with universities, law students, law</p>

⁶ https://www.trust.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/2024-TrustLaw-Index-of-Pro-Bono.pdf?utm_ (Last viewed on 22 February 2026).

⁷ Available at <https://thecapitalaw.com/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

⁸ Available at <https://www.herrera-partners.com/pro-bono/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

⁹ Available at <https://www.lannalawyers.com/pro-bono-services/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹⁰ Available at <https://www.tilleke.com/pro-bono/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹¹ Available at <https://anglothailegal.com/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹² Available at <https://www.thanathippartners.com/csr-and-pro-bono> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹³ Available at <http://thaivolunteer.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹⁴ Available at <https://www.babseacle.org/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

	<p>faculties, lawyers, and other members of the legal community, and NGO partners to develop clinical programs throughout Southeast Asia. The BABSEA CLE Foundation in Thailand is an independently registered local non-profit and works to develop clinical legal education programs and other community initiatives through partnerships with various universities in Thailand. Projects undertaken by Thailand's BABSEA CLE Foundation include the Legal Clinicians in Residence project, the Legal Ethics, Pro Bono, Access to Justice and Professional Responsibility Curriculum Development project, and the Community Teaching project.</p> <p>In addition, refugee rights advocacy groups in Thailand have begun to develop pro bono programs to help asylum seekers obtain legal assistance, as Thailand has a particularly large refugee population.¹⁵</p> <p>The Rights in Exile Program provides refugee legal aid information and a directory for pro bono opportunities available in various NGOs, such as Asylum Access Thailand (AAT)¹⁶ and Caritas Thailand.¹⁷</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 did not find any prominent examples of AI-use in pro bono matters specifically. Thailand does not yet have widespread NGO-led AI legal aid platforms but some initiatives are emerging.</p> <p>For example, it was reported that the Ministry of Justice launched "Brother Protector", an AI chatbot that provides free legal consultation services to help protect people's rights.¹⁸</p> <p>As part of a research project, an AI chatbot called LAW-U was developed to assist victims and survivors of sexual violence by translating complex legal provisions into easily understandable language.¹⁹</p>

¹⁵ Available at UNHCR (Thailand) <https://www.unhcr.or.th/en> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹⁶ Available at <https://asylumaccess.org/where-we-work/thailand/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹⁷ Available at <https://www.caritas.org/where-caritas-work/asia/thailand/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

¹⁸ <https://gcc.go.th/2025/06/05/>

¹⁹ <https://ieeexplore.ieee.org/document/9539229> (Last viewed on 22 February 2026).

Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts

14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.

The Lawyers Council of Thailand and the Thai Bar Association provide pro bono legal services, including legal counselling, recommendation services, assistance with transactions and contract drafting, and representation of clients in litigation proceedings.

The following NGOs and advocacy groups in Thailand have developed pro bono programs and resources.

- Thai Volunteer Service Foundation;²⁰
- BABSEA CLE;²¹
- Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development;²²
- New Tactics;²³
- HDF Mercy Centre;²⁴
- Internet Law Reform Dialogue;²⁵
- Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network;²⁶
- International Rescue Committee;²⁷
- Asylum Access Thailand (AAT);²⁸
- Center for Asylum Protection (CAP);²⁹
- Refugee Rights Litigation Project (RRLP);³⁰
- Human Security Alliance;
- Jesuit Refugee Service;³¹
- The Asia Foundation;³²
- Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women;³³
- iLaw;³⁴
- Thai Lawyers for Human Rights;³⁵
- Global Alms Incorporated (GAI);³⁶
- Human Rights and Development

²⁰ Available at <http://thaivolunteer.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²¹ Available at <http://www.babseacle.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²² Available at <http://www.forum-asia.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²³ Available at <http://www.newtactics.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²⁴ Available at <http://www.mercycentre.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²⁵ Available at <http://www.ilaw.or.th> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²⁶ Available at <http://www.aprrn.info> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²⁷ Available at <https://www.rescue.org/country/thailand> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²⁸ Available at <https://asylumaccess.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

²⁹ Available at <https://capthailand.org/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³⁰ Available at Facebook RRLP - Refugee Rights Litigation Project (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³¹ Available at <https://jrs.net/en/country/thailand/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³² Available at <https://asiafoundation.org/where-we-work/thailand/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³³ Available at <https://www.gaatw.org/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³⁴ Available at <https://ilaw.or.th> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³⁵ Available at <https://tlhr2014.com/en/> (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³⁶ Available at www.globalalms.com (last visited on 9 January 2025).

	Foundation (HRDF); ³⁷ and <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arakan Workers Organization (AWO).³⁸
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?	The Thai Volunteer Service Foundation ³⁹ provides pro bono directories where a local or foreign lawyer can register or browse to find pro bono opportunities.
16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?	There are no lists or rankings related to pro bono work in Thailand.

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Learn more

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³⁷ Available at www.hrdfoundation.org (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³⁸ Available at www.facebook.com/awooffice (last visited on 9 January 2025).

³⁹ Available at <http://thaivolunteer.org> (last visited on 9 January 2025).