

# Global Pro Bono Guide 2026

## Pro Bono Practices and Opportunities in Venezuela

### Introduction

There is a significant need for pro bono legal services in Venezuela due to the large social and economic inequality that exists. Venezuelan lawyers have always done pro bono work for people close to them without such work being formalised, quantified, or collected; however, the institutionalisation of pro bono work is a relatively recent development. The main obstacle for the institutionalisation of pro bono work is that there are no governmental policies or bar associations in Venezuela that require Venezuelan lawyers to perform professional volunteer work for people with limited resources. Pro bono work has not been a priority for law firms in Venezuela. However, within the last few years, law firms have become increasingly conscious of the fact that, with their assistance in pro bono matters, they can help people with limited resources to access justice. A growing number of lawyers are providing pro bono legal assistance to detainees in criminal cases, either privately or through non-governmental organisations such as Foro Penal<sup>1</sup> and PROVEA.<sup>2</sup>

### 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"> <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 Venezuela is mainly regulated by the Lawyers' Law (<i>Ley de Abogados</i>) and the Lawyers' Ethics Code (<i>Código de Ética del Abogado</i>). In general, the Lawyers' Law sets forth the requirements to be able to practise law; the description of what should be considered a law practice; the individuals that are allowed to practise law; the rights and obligations of lawyers; what should be considered an illegal law practice; and disciplinary provisions applicable to lawyers. The Lawyers' Law also establishes the regulations of institutions</p>

<sup>1</sup> See <https://foropenal.com/> (last visited 12 February 2025).

<sup>2</sup> See <https://provea.org/> (last visited 12 February 2025).

providing for the social welfare of lawyers. The Lawyers' Ethics Code mainly pertains to the moral behaviour and social conduct that a lawyer should abide by when practising in Venezuela.

In order to practise law in Venezuela, a person has to obtain a legal degree from a local university. Individuals holding a law degree issued by a foreign university would have to validate such degree in accordance with Venezuelan law.

Afterwards, registration with one of the various bar associations existing in Venezuela is required, as well as registration with the Lawyer Social Security Institute (*Instituto de Previsión Social del Abogado*). There are 23 different bar associations, one for each Venezuelan region, and each one is governed by its own regulations. All of these bar associations fall under the governance of the Federal Bar Association (*Federación de Colegios de Abogados*). Venezuela does not have multiple licence schemes or multiple levels of practitioners.

Upon a lawyer's registration, they are granted a registration number that allows them to both litigate and carry out any action as a lawyer in any practice of law around the country.

There are no differences for lawyers working as in-house counsel under Venezuelan regulations.

## Regulatory landscape for pro bono

2. Describe the laws or rules that regulate the provision of pro bono legal services.

There is no specific law regulating pro bono services provided by individuals in Venezuela.

However, if such services are offered within or through a non-governmental organisation (NGO), the Law for the Control, Regularization, Activities, and Financing of Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Social Organizations applies. This law, published in Official Gazette No. 6.855 on 15 November 2024, requires Venezuelan NGOs to register with the National Registry of Non-Governmental Organizations maintained by the Ministry of Popular Power for Internal Relations, Justice and Peace, and foreign NGOs to register with the National Registry of Non-Governmental Organizations maintained by the Ministry of the Popular Power for Foreign Affairs.

<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 special licence to provide pro bono legal services in Venezuela. However, if pro bono services are to be provided within or through NGOs, the NGOs must be registered as described in II(b)(1) 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>Foreign lawyers do not require any additional licence(s) to provide pro bono legal services in Venezuela. A foreign lawyer's university degree must be validated in Venezuela, and they must be registered with the corresponding regional bar association and the Lawyer Social Security Institute (<i>Instituto de Previsión Social del Abogado</i>). Venezuela does not have multiple licence schemes or multiple levels of practitioners.</p>
<p>5. Are lawyers required by such rules to work a minimum number of pro bono hours? If so, how many?</p>	<p>There is no obligation on private attorneys to work a minimum number of pro bono hours in Venezuela. However, Fundación Pro Bono Venezuela (ProVene) is making concerted efforts to make law firms in Caracas achieve certain goals of pro bono hours per year, taking as its reference the Pro Bono Declaration for the Americas (<i>Declaración Pro Bono de las Américas</i>), that requires law firms subscribed to it to work 20 hours per lawyer each year in connection with pro bono cases.<sup>3</sup></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>In order to become licensed lawyers, law students (in some universities) in Venezuela must devote a specific number of hours (as determined by each university) to assist in non-profit legal matters. To support students in fulfilling this requirement, Venezuelan universities have created legal clinics (<i>Clínicas Jurídicas</i>) through which law students provide pro bono legal services.</p> <p>In addition, Venezuelan law students, as well as students aspiring to obtain any other professional degree in Venezuela, are required to perform a minimum of 120 hours of Community Service (<i>Servicio Comunitario</i>) in order to graduate. Community Service consists of volunteering in resource-poor areas surrounding the university.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Pro Bono Declaration for the Americas, at <https://www.vancecenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/english.pdf> (last visited on 12 February 2025).

	However, such volunteering does not oblige students to carry out professional work, i.e., law students do not necessarily have to perform legal work (although work at <i>Clínicas Jurídicas</i> would qualify towards this requirement).
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?	There are no specific targets set by any local bar association or regulatory body.
8. Do lawyers receive any “Continuing Legal Education” (CLE) or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked?	Lawyers do not receive any CLE or equivalent credit for pro bono hours worked in Venezuela.
<b>Insurance and advertising</b>	
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?	Lawyers in Venezuela are not required to be covered by professional indemnity legal insurance to provide pro bono legal services.  There are no differences regarding in-house lawyers under Venezuelan regulations
10. Are there any rules that limit or prohibit advertising of pro bono successes or soliciting new pro bono clients?	According to the Lawyers’ Ethics Code, article 10, a lawyer cannot advertise his/her own praise, nor encourage news or comments related to matters in which they have intervened or how they conducted them. Advertising through written or audiovisual means will be limited to the mention of their name, scientific titles, specialty, address of their office, and telephone and post office box. Any announcement of quasi-commercial content stating that special results and advantages are promised constitutes “a serious lack of professional ethics”. We understand that this extends to pro bono legal services as well.
<b>Pro bono practice and culture</b>	
11. What are the main areas of law which require or present opportunities for pro bono? What are the major unmet legal	There are great opportunities to assist with pro bono work in Venezuela due to the high percentage of the population with limited

needs?	<p>financial resources, who have no opportunities to be assisted or advised by a lawyer.</p> <p>The main areas of law in which there are more opportunities to provide pro bono legal services in Venezuela are criminal law and human rights, which in Venezuela often go hand in hand.</p>
12. Who are the main providers of pro bono legal services?	<p>Most pro bono legal services are provided by (i) legal clinics (<i>Clínicas Jurídicas</i>) created by universities, (ii) several Venezuelan (and a few international) NGOs, such as Foro Penal<sup>4</sup> or Provea,<sup>5</sup> and (iii) Venezuelan foundations, such as ProVene.<sup>6</sup></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>In November 2024, the Supreme Court of Justice entered into an agreement with the Ministry of the Popular Power for Science and Technology to digitalise and automate the judicial system to guarantee quicker proceedings.</p> <p>Additionally, since June 2021, the Supreme Court of Justice has allowed and promoted the holding of online hearings through videoconferences. These provisions also apply to pro bono cases.</p> <p>There are no technological innovations specifically aimed at pro bono cases.</p>
<b>Sources of Pro Bono Opportunities and Key Contacts</b>	
14. Describe notable sources of pro bono matters or resources in your jurisdiction.	<p>We believe there are no governmental sources of pro bono legal services in Venezuela. However, in accordance with the Constitution (article 49) and Organic Code of Criminal Procedure (article 127(3)), a person accused of committing a crime in Venezuela is entitled to receive legal aid if required.</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>Although the Constitution of Venezuela recognises and protects the development of humanitarian activities throughout the country, the government approved the Law for the Control, Regularization, Activities, and Financing of Non-Governmental and Non-Profit Social Organizations 2024, which created new barriers</p>

<sup>4</sup> See <https://foropenal.com/> (last visited 12 February 2025).

<sup>5</sup> See <https://provea.org/> (last visited 12 February 2025).

<sup>6</sup> See Instagram account as website is outdated [https://www.instagram.com/provene\\_org/](https://www.instagram.com/provene_org/) (last visited 12 February 2025).

	<p>for NGOs.</p> <p>ProVene is making efforts to encourage law firms to achieve certain goals of pro bono hours per year, as well as providing pro bono legal services on its own. Likewise, some law firms in Venezuela already have pro bono programs in which their lawyers are requested or suggested to work on pro bono cases sent by ProVene or by NGOs or other organisations founded by, or with tight relations to, the partners of such law firms. Venezuelan companies also carry out different activities during the year that allow their employees, including lawyers in their legal departments, to work as volunteers with different NGOs, following the guidelines of the company's Corporate Social Responsibility (<i>Responsabilidad Social Empresarial</i>).</p> <p>ProVene has several social network accounts in which they post pro bono projects and programs; also, anyone can register on their website to become a volunteer and be informed of any opportunities.<sup>7</sup></p>
<p>16. Are there any awards, lists or rankings related to pro bono work?</p>	<p>No. There are no rankings, awards, or lists in Venezuela related to pro bono work.</p>

## Acknowledgements

In connection with this chapter, we are grateful for the support and insight of local counsel:

**D'Empaire Reyna Abogados**

## Learn more

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

---

<sup>7</sup> See Instagram account: [https://www.instagram.com/provene\\_org/](https://www.instagram.com/provene_org/) . X account: [https://x.com/ProVene?ref\\_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor](https://x.com/ProVene?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Eauthor) . Facebook account: <https://www.facebook.com/ProVene/> and LinkedIn account: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/fundacionprovene/> (last visited on 12 February 2025).