

Collaboration for organising your jurisdiction's pro bono week

Supporting jurisdictions around the world to arrange a day, week or month to celebrate and support legal pro bono
Sharing ideas for events and communications that can also be used through the year to encourage pro bono



Objective of this global initiative

This collaborative initiative seeks to encourage and support jurisdictions across the world in arranging their own version of a pro bono day, week or month (referred to here as a “*pro bono week*” for convenience).

A pro bono week is a dedicated period of the year in which events and communications activities take place to encourage lawyers to volunteer, and to support effective pro bono in the jurisdiction.

The initiative aims firstly to help new jurisdictions to organise a pro bono week for the first time. Secondly, to enable peer-to-peer exchange of ideas and practices for existing organisers of pro bono weeks.

Many of the ideas for events and communications shared by this initiative can also be used at other times of the year in a jurisdiction to support pro bono.

Supporting legal pro bono

This initiative seeks to support legal pro bono around the world, given the unique role that legal professionals can play in strengthening the rule of law through access to justice. There are varying definitions of pro bono, but for the purpose of this initiative we refer to the provision of free legal assistance by volunteer lawyers to individuals in need or to charities/non-profits.

Objectives for a pro bono week

Pro bono weeks have been used successfully in a number of jurisdictions to encourage and support the delivery of legal pro bono, involving events and communications that engage thousands of lawyers and others. The objectives for existing and new pro bono weeks may differ, but may include one or more of the following:

- **Celebrate** the legal profession for their pro bono commitment.
- **Inspire and inform** the legal community, civil society, policymakers, and/or the public about the need for and role of pro bono, and the benefits of legal volunteering.
- **More effective or widespread** pro bono by discussing challenges and by sharing lessons, best practice models and other information.
- **Strengthen the culture** of pro bono amongst a jurisdiction's legal profession, and **strengthen collaboration** amongst organisations that deliver pro bono help.
- **Fundraise** for pro bono clearing houses or similar charities/non-profits.

Reasons to arrange a national week

Whilst the above objectives of promoting pro bono can be advanced in different ways, a dedicated pro bono week offers a unique opportunity to unite the legal community around pro bono across a country or region. The benefits may include:

- **Bringing stakeholders together** with a common goal of supporting pro bono across the nation.
- **Securing the engagement on pro bono** by the legal profession, leaders, policymakers, the wider public and/or the media, with the aid of annual events or communications.
- **Driving progress** in the jurisdiction by creating an annual focal point to develop pro bono and measure its impact, such as by launching projects, reports or statistics.

Activities to encourage and support pro bono

Pro bono weeks across jurisdictions see a different mixture of events (online or in person), together with various communications, some modest in size, others with a large number of events.

Those arranging their first pro bono day/week might want to start with just one or two activities.

Many of the below ideas can also be used any time of the year to encourage and support pro bono in a jurisdiction.

- **Pro bono clinics:** invite lawyers to deliver pro bono advice at clinics during the week.
- **Pro bono fair or other recruitment drive:** showcase opportunities for lawyers or law students, whether at an event or using communications.
- **Training / continuing education:** training sessions for lawyers in areas of pro bono need.
- A variety of other events including:
 - **Launch events** to kick-start the pro bono week and provide visibility for the initiative, e.g. with a high profile speaker, or accompanied by proclamation by a leading figure in the judiciary or government;
 - **Seminars / panels:** presentations or discussions on barriers, best practices or benefits of pro bono;
 - **Networking receptions:** to celebrate lawyers and pro bono leaders, and to facilitate new or stronger relationships.
- **Pro bono awards / honour rolls:** encourage pro bono by recognising and celebrating volunteer lawyers and non-profits.
- **Launch new projects:** publicly introduce a pro bono initiative or partnership.
- **Publish reports and key statistics:** launch a publication on research, surveys, or recommendations for pro bono.
- **Issue news releases or write articles:** feature pro bono in the press, newsletters & blogs.
- **Social media campaign:** share graphics or videos showcasing pro bono's positive impact.
- **Internal events or messages:** promote pro bono to staff at firms & other organisations.
- **Art / multidisciplinary approach:** invite stakeholders from other sectors to collaborate such as working with local artists/actors to showcase topical public interest law issues through art or theatre, or hosting a student debate competition on similar issues.

Fundraising walks

An additional activity in some jurisdictions is to arrange a “legal walk” or “walk for justice” either as part of pro bono week or at a different time of the year. Such walks can help bring together the legal profession and non-profits in a positive and visible way, raising funds for pro bono clearing houses and other key non-profits.

Organisers of a jurisdiction’s pro bono week

Organisers of pro bono weeks can vary to suit the needs and context of each jurisdiction. Potential organisers might, for example include: (a) national bar association or law society; (b) national pro bono clearing house, or similar non-profit; and/or (c) an organising committee that brings together additional organisations, such as law firms and law schools.

The national organisers may wish to directly arrange certain central activities (e.g. launch event and communications), and encourage organisations from cities/regions across the jurisdiction to arrange their own public or internal events.

The national organisers might choose the best timing locally for their day/week/month, subject to any regional initiative such as European Pro Bono Week.

In addition to each jurisdiction’s pro bono week, there may be opportunities for joint online events across jurisdictions, to compare approaches and share ideas.

Support for national organisers

The initiative aims to provide information and support for potential and current organisers of pro bono weeks in different countries:

- In addition to this summary document, various toolkits and template materials, offering more detailed ideas from existing pro bono weeks around the world.
- Peer-to-peer support from organisers of existing pro bono weeks.
- Group discussions with current and potential organisers to share information and ideas (in 2023 at the PILnet Global Forum and the Asia Pro Bono Conference).
- Signposting to broader resources on how pro bono can be developed in a jurisdiction.

A global collaboration

This collaborative initiative has been established by organisations or committees who arrange pro bono days/weeks/months around the world:

- [American Bar Association’s Standing Committee on Pro Bono and Public Service](#) (USA’s National Celebration of Pro Bono)
- [Australian Pro Bono Centre](#) (Australia’s National Pro Bono Day)
- [Cayman Islands Legal Assistance Clinic](#) (Cayman Islands Pro Bono Week)
- [Centro Mexicano Pro Bono](#) (Mexico’s Pro Bono Month)
- [European Pro Bono Initiative](#) (European Pro Bono Week)
- [Fundación Pro Bono España](#) (Spain’s Pro Bono Week)

- [PILnet](#) (European Pro Bono Week and member of Hong Kong pro bono walk committee)
- [Pro Bono SG](#) (Singapore Pro Bono Week)
- [Public Interest Law Partnership of Nigeria](#) (Nigeria Pro Bono Week)
- [Red Pro Bono de las Americas](#) / Pro Bono Network of the Americas (encouraging new pro bono weeks in Latin America, following co-arranging Argentina's pro bono week)
- [TrustLaw](#) (European Pro Bono Week)
- [UK Pro Bono Week organising committee](#) (UK Pro Bono Week)

In addition, the following are founding supporters of the initiative:

- [Advocates for International Development](#)
- [BABSEACLE](#)
- [London Legal Support Trust](#) (organiser of the London Legal Walk)
- [Vance Center for International Justice](#)

The International Bar Association (IBA) [Pro Bono Committee](#) supports the initiative.

The initiative amalgamates the ideas and resources from all of these organisations and their jurisdictions (so not everything promoted by the initiative will necessarily be carried out by everyone).

Organisers of pro bono weeks in other jurisdictions are warmly welcomed to be part of this initiative, including to share ideas or to provide peer-to-peer support to others. Please contact info@ProBonoWeekCollaboration.org.

How to get involved, seek support or find out more

Visit ProBonoWeekCollaboration.org for toolkits and links to more resources to assist you in organising your own pro bono week, or events and communications throughout the year.

We'd love to hear your ideas and feedback if you arrange your jurisdiction's pro bono week or other relevant activities, please contact info@ProBonoWeekCollaboration.org.

For more information or to get peer-to-peer support, speak to your existing contact at one of the above organisations, including the following regional contacts:

- Africa: Funmi@pilp.ng
- Asia: tanguy.lim@probono.sg and jdavis@pilnet.org
- Caribbean: Andrew.Perkins@gov.ky
- European Pro Bono Week: lszucs@pilnet.org
- Latin America: jchavezalor@redprobono.org
- USA: celebrateprobono@americanbar.org
- UK: TobyBrown@southsquare.com

To see the dates of and other news about existing pro bono weeks around the world visit GlobalProBonoHub.com/events

Download the latest version of this document at ProBonoWeekCollaboration.org