

FOREIGN LAWYER IN-HOUSE COUNSEL PRACTICE AND PRO BONO

Multijurisdictional practice rules present an obstacle not only for in-house attorneys licensed out-of-state, but also for foreign attorneys authorized to practice in another country who seek to work in-house in the United States. In today's global economy, foreign attorneys may have unique opportunities to move between corporate offices within their company. These non-U.S. attorneys should be aware of the rules that affect their ability to practice for their employer and to provide pro bono legal services.

As of September 2025, twenty-eight (28) United States jurisdictions permit foreign lawyers to work in state for their employer without becoming fully licensed to practice law in that jurisdiction. Of these, twenty (20) jurisdictions require foreign lawyers to register with the state bar association in order to work in-house, while eight (8) jurisdictions permit foreign lawyers to practice in-house pursuant to an authorization exception in the rules of professional conduct.

There are few exemptions permitting pro bono practice by foreign in-house lawyers. Only six (6) states have rules that permit foreign lawyers to provide pro bono legal services. Under these rules, foreign lawyers, permitted to work for their employer, may also provide pro bono legal services. The chart below summarizes the foreign lawyer registration requirements and indicates which states permit foreign lawyers to provide pro bono services.



Summary of Multijurisdictional Practice and Pro Bono Rules for Non-U.S. Lawyers¹

State	May a Foreign Licensed Attorney Work as In-House Counsel?	Rule on Foreign Licensed Attorneys Working as In-House Counsel	Rule on Foreign In-House Registered Counsel Pro Bono Practice	Pro Bono Provision
Alabama	No	No rule	No rule	
Alaska	Yes - No Registration	<u>Alaska R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(d)(1)</u>	No rule	
Arizona	Yes - Registration	<u>Ariz. Sup. Ct. R. 38(a)(2)</u>	<u>Ariz. Sup. Ct. R. 38(d)(2)(B)(iv)</u>	Registered in-house counsel may provide pro bono legal services under the auspices and supervision of an approved legal services organization.
Arkansas	No	No rule	N/A	
California	No	No rule	N/A	
Colorado	No	No rule	N/A	
Connecticut	Yes - Registration	<u>Conn. Prac. Book § 2-15A</u>	<u>Conn. Prac. Book § 2-15A(c)(5)</u>	Registered in-house counsel may provide pro bono legal services offered under the auspices of organized legal aid societies or state/local bar association projects, or under the supervision of a member of the Connecticut Bar.
Delaware	Yes - Registration	<u>Del. Sup. Ct. R. 55.1(a)(1)</u>	<u>Del. Sup. Ct. R. 55.1(g)</u>	Registered in-house counsel may provide pro bono legal services in Delaware offered under the auspices of organized legal aid societies, or state/local bar association projects, or provided under the supervision of a member of the Delaware Bar.

¹ Jurisdictions generally require that the attorney must be qualified and in good standing; therefore, we have not repeated this requirement for each. Some rules include additional restrictions. See the text of the actual rules for complete information. Some rules include additional restrictions. See the text of the actual rules for complete information.

State	May a Foreign Licensed Attorney Work as In-House Counsel?	Rule on Foreign Licensed Attorneys Working as In-House Counsel	Rule on Foreign In-House Registered Counsel Pro Bono Practice	Pro Bono Provision
District of Columbia	Yes - No Registration	D.C. App. R. 49(c)(6)	No rule	
Florida	Yes - Registration	Fla. B. Reg. R. 17-1.2(a)	No rule	
Georgia	Yes - No Registration	Ga. R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(f)	No rule	
Hawaii	No	No rule	N/A	
Idaho	No	No rule	N/A	
Illinois	Yes - Registration	Ill. Sup. Ct. R. 716	No rule	
Indiana	Yes - Registration	Ind. R. Admission B. & Discipline Att'y 6 § 2(a)(ii)	No rule	
Iowa	Yes - Registration	Iowa Ct. R. 31.16(1)	No rule	
Kansas	Yes – No Registration	Kan. R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(d)(1) creates an exception for foreign lawyers to provide legal services to the lawyer's employer on foreign law only; only lawyers admitted in a U.S. jurisdiction can apply for a limited license under Kan. Sup. Ct. R. 721	N/A	
Kentucky	No	No rule	N/A	
Louisiana	No	No rule	N/A	
Maine	No	No rule	N/A	
Maryland	No	No rule	N/A	

State	May a Foreign Licensed Attorney Work as In-House Counsel?	Rule on Foreign Licensed Attorneys Working as In-House Counsel	Rule on Foreign In-House Registered Counsel Pro Bono Practice	Pro Bono Provision
Massachusetts	Yes - Registration	<u>Mass. Sup. Ct. R. 4.02(9)(a)</u>	No rule	
Michigan	No	No rule	N/A	
Minnesota	Yes - Registration	<u>Minn. R. Admission B. 11(A)-(D)</u>	No rule	
Mississippi	No	No rule	N/A	
Missouri	Yes - Registration	<u>Mo. Sup. Ct. R. 8.105(a)(2)(B)</u>	<u>Mo. Sup. Ct. R. 8.105(c)</u>	Limited licensed in-house counsel, in addition to working for their employer, may engage in pro bono work with an organization approved for this purpose by the Missouri Bar, including four regional not-for-profit Legal Services programs.
Montana	Yes - No Registration	<u>Mt. R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(d)</u>	No rule	
Nebraska	No	No rule	N/A	
Nevada	No	No rule	N/A	
New Hampshire	Yes – No Registration	<u>N.H. R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(d)(1)</u>	No rule	
New Jersey	Yes - Registration	<u>N.J. Ct. R. 1:27-2A</u>	No rule	
New Mexico	Yes - Registration	<u>N.M. R. Prof. Conduct 16-505(F)(3)</u>	No rule	

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New York	Yes - Registration	N.Y. R. Ct. App. § 522.1(a)-(b)	N.Y. R. Ct. App. § 522.8(a)	A foreign attorney registered pursuant to section 522.1(b) of this Part shall only provide such pro bono legal services under the direct supervision of a duly registered New York lawyer.
North Carolina	Yes - No Registration	N.C. R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(d)(1)	No rule	
North Dakota	Yes - Registration	N.D. R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(c)(1); N.D. Sup. Ct. R. 3(D)	No rule	
Ohio	No	No rule	N/A	
Oklahoma	No	No rule	N/A	
Oregon	Yes - Registration	Or. Sup. Ct. R. Admission Att’y § 16.1	No rule	
Pennsylvania	No	No rule	N/A	
Rhode Island	No	No rule	N/A	
South Carolina	No	No rule	N/A	
South Dakota	No	No rule	N/A	

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Tennessee	Yes - Registration	<u>Tenn. Sup. Ct. Art. X, § 10.01</u>	No rule	
Texas	Yes - Registration	<u>R. Gov. Admission Bar of Tex. 14 § 1(b)</u>	No rule	
Utah	No	No rule	N/A	
Vermont	No	No rule	N/A	
Virginia	Yes - Registration	<u>Va. Sup. Ct. R. 1A:5 Part II(a)</u>	No rule	
Washington	Yes - Registration	<u>Wash. Admission and Prac. R. 8</u>	No rule	
West Virginia	Yes - No Registration	<u>W. Va. R. Prof. Conduct 5.5(d)(1)</u>	No rule	
Wisconsin	Yes - Registration	<u>Wisc. Sup. Ct. R. 10.03(4)(f)</u>	<u>Wisc. Sup. Ct. R. 10.03(4)(f)</u>	Registered in-house counsel may provide pro bono legal services to persons of limited means or charitable, religious, civic, community, governmental and educational organizations in matters that are designed primarily to address the needs of persons of limited means; and to such organizations or to civil rights, civil liberties or public rights organizations, where the payment of standard legal fees would significantly deplete the organization's economic resources or would be otherwise inappropriate.
Wyoming	No	No rule	N/A	

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