

## **Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA) Services and Events** **(<https://www.activelink.ie/node/107629>)**



### **1. PILA Pro Bono Referral Scheme**

PILA aims to develop public interest law in Ireland. You can read about the remit of our services and how we can assist NGOs [here \(https://www.pila.ie/help/\)](https://www.pila.ie/help/). The centrepiece of PILA's work is the Pro Bono Referral Scheme, which supports civil society organisations in obtaining pro bono legal assistance where they do not have the resources or in-house expertise.

For non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and community organisations tackling social problems, there is huge potential for using the law as a tool in addressing the needs of individuals and communities experiencing poverty, disadvantage, and exclusion. Lack of access to legal expertise can reduce the impact of these organisations and act as a barrier to solving critical societal challenges.

Through the referral scheme, PILA works in partnership with these organisations to identify a range of complementary legal strategies and models that enhance their work.

#### **What kind of organisations does PILA work with?**

The Pro Bono Referral Scheme is open to social justice organisations that work for the benefit of marginalised and disadvantaged people in Ireland. That means organisations that have a campaigning, law reform or advocacy arm that may benefit from more effective use or understanding of the law.

#### **How to make a referral to PILA?**

To begin the referral process, please email [pila@flac.ie](mailto:pila@flac.ie) (<mailto:pila@flac.ie>). Include a few details about your organisation such as its purpose, the social group it aims to assist, and how it uses the law in the course of its work, as well as the legal assistance required. Check out the [NGO Legal Check List \(https://www.flac.ie/assets/files/pdf/ngo\\_legal\\_need\\_check\\_list.pdf\)](https://www.flac.ie/assets/files/pdf/ngo_legal_need_check_list.pdf) to see the range of situations PILA can help with.

A member of our team will get in touch to schedule a short call, an opportunity for us to ask more questions if needed and will then provide you with the link to the application form. We will then process the referral and send it on to suitable legal practitioners. Finally, PILA will make the connection between the NGO and lawyer who has volunteered to provide pro bono legal assistance.

#### **What legal assistance is available to NGOs and civil society organisations?**

NGO can receive help on any legal need for which they do not have resources or in-house expertise. Our one exception is that we do not assist with internal organisational conflicts.

PILA works closely with organisations to develop ways in which the law can be used further in their work. Once a particular legal need has been identified, we invest time in understanding the specific legal question to be answered before referring the matter to a pro bono barrister, solicitor or law firm with suitable skills.

The organisation then takes the matter forward as part of a normal client-solicitor relationship, although PILA may stay involved at the request of the organisation. An ongoing relationship is not created with the legal professional. For further legal assistance, the organisation can submit a fresh request to PILA.

#### **What level of service can be expected?**

All legal assistance provided through PILA is given the same priority by lawyers as paid work and is completed to the same high standards. This includes ensuring that lawyers are competent to take on the matter, fully observe client confidentiality and all other rules of professional ethics. Legal partners agree to complete the work to an agreed deadline and to the NGO's satisfaction.

## **At the moment, PILA is unable to help individuals with legal queries.**

The only exception is where an NGO partner is supporting a person with a legal need that relates to a wider systemic issue.

## **2. NGO Pitch Events**

The objective of the NGO Pitch Events is to connect Pro Bono Pledge Ireland Signatories that have committed to doing pro bono work with NGOs and civil society organisations that have projects in need of legal expertise. This service is suitable for organisations who have a current or predicted long term need for legal assistance.

### **What does the NGO or civil society organisation do during a Pitch Event?**

The event takes place online, usually in a Zoom Webinar format. Representatives from civil society organisations will have the opportunity to introduce themselves to Pledge Signatories, which include over 50 law firms across Ireland. During the 10-minute pitch, representatives of 4 selected NGOs, charities, social enterprises or other civil society groups should provide an overview of their organisation and articulate their unmet legal needs.

Following each pitch, Pledge Signatories will have the opportunity to ask any questions which will help them decide whether they can form a long-term relationship with the NGO and offer pro bono legal assistance. After the event, PILA will facilitate the introduction between the civil society representatives and the legal practitioners who wish to develop an ongoing relationship.

### **How to participate in an NGO Pitch Event?**

Please complete [this application form \(https://www.pila.ie/assets/files/docx/ngo\\_pitch\\_application\\_form\\_2024.docx\)](https://www.pila.ie/assets/files/docx/ngo_pitch_application_form_2024.docx) and email it to [pila@flac.ie](mailto:pila@flac.ie) (<mailto:pila@flac.ie>) with the subject line 'NGO Pitch Event Application 2024' by **5pm Friday 31 May 2023**. Your application will be considered for all NGO Pitch events that we will organise in 2024. The first NGO Pitch of this year will take place in June, and the exact date will be communicated to the selected applicants. We will consider all applications and inform you of the outcome.

## **3. Information session for new NGOs, civil society groups and volunteer organisations**

PILA will host an informal online event for organisations which are not familiar with our range of services. We will offer information on the PILA Pro Bono Referral Scheme, Impact Projects, Working Groups, Legal Education Sessions and NGO Pitch Events. We will also discuss our criteria for partnering with civil society organisations and the legal matters we can assist with. During the event, participants will have the opportunity to ask any questions and receive valuable guidance.

**Location:** Online – Zoom meeting

**Date and time:** Tuesday 30 April, 1pm – 2pm

**Registration:** please [register here. \(https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYoduihpjkhvH9K-Ct2yQAFIakTFPkhh\\_EH0\)](https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYoduihpjkhvH9K-Ct2yQAFIakTFPkhh_EH0). After registering, you will automatically receive the link to join the Information Session.

## **4. Survey for NGOs and civil society organisations**

We are committed to improving our services and tailor them to the specific needs of the organisations which use the law in the public interest or for the benefit of marginalised groups in Ireland. As such, we are looking for your suggestions as to events we should organise this year, as well as for feedback on our services. We are also interested in what type of legal assistance your organisation needs in its day-to-day work or for its future projects.

To share your thoughts, suggestions, and feedback with us, please fill out [this survey \(https://forms.office.com/e/gJVkPAMnie\)](https://forms.office.com/e/gJVkPAMnie), or email us directly at [PILA@flac.ie](mailto:PILA@flac.ie) (<mailto:PILA@flac.ie>). The survey takes around 10 minutes to complete, and not all questions are mandatory. The information you provide will not be shared with

any other organisation.

**Region**

Nationwide

Public Interest Law Alliance (PILA) (<https://www.pila.ie/help/>)

**Date Entered/Updated**

15th Apr, 2024

**Expiry Date**

15th Jun, 2024

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**Source URL:** <https://www.activelink.ie/community-exchange/services-requests/107629-public-interest-law-alliance-pila-services-and-events>