COUNTRY GUIDE



AMERICAS

Brazil.

Brazil's Penal Code makes failing to help someone in need an offense (article 135, omissao de socorro), and the Constitution lists building a solidary society among its fundamental objectives. Federal laws regulate volunteer service (Law 9.608/1998) and partnerships between public bodies and nonprofit civil society organizations (Law 13.019/2014).

DUTY TO HELP A STRANGER
Yes

PROTECTION FOR HELPERS
None found

GIVING AND SERVICE
4 programs and laws

Is there a legal duty to help a stranger?

YES

Article 135 of Decreto-Lei 2.848/1940 punishes failing to help, when it can be done without personal risk, an abandoned or lost child or an injured, helpless person in serious and imminent danger, or failing to call public authorities in those cases. The penalty is detention of one to six months or a fine, increased by half if serious bodily injury results and tripled if death results. Article 135-A separately punishes demanding a guarantee as a condition for emergency medical care. Translation from the Portuguese statute is this guide's own.

Decreto-Lei No. 2.848, de 7 de dezembro de 1940 (Codigo Penal), art. 135 (Presidencia da Republica (planalto.gov.br))

Are people who help protected?

NONE FOUND

No Brazilian statute was found in the sources reviewed that specifically protects good-faith helpers from liability. Law 13.722/2018, which requires first-aid training in schools, is a training mandate and not a liability shield.

How the government promotes giving and service

Constitution, article 3

Among the fundamental objectives of the Republic the Constitution lists building a free, just and solidary society (sociedade livre, justa e solidaria).

PRESIDENCIA DA REPUBLICA (PLANALTO.GOV.BR)

Lei 9.608/1998 (voluntary service)

The law defines voluntary service as unpaid activity by an individual for a public body or nonprofit institution with civic, cultural, educational, scientific, recreational or assistance purposes. It states that volunteer service creates no employment relationship and allows reimbursement of documented expenses.

PRESIDENCIA DA REPUBLICA (PLANALTO.GOV.BR)

Lei 13.019/2014 (Marco Regulatorio das Organizacoes da Sociedade Civil)

The law sets general rules for partnerships between public administration and civil society organizations, and creates the termo de colaboracao and termo de fomento instruments. Its article 5 lists social participation and strengthening civil society among its foundations.

PRESIDENCIA DA REPUBLICA (PLANALTO.GOV.BR)

Lei 13.722/2018 (first aid training)

The law requires public and private basic education schools and child recreation establishments to train teachers and staff in basic first aid, with courses offered

annually.

PRESIDENCIA DA REPUBLICA (PLANALTO.GOV.BR)

Ways to give and volunteer

Brazil has a large nonprofit sector, called organizações da sociedade civil (OSCs), and many local social services are run by religious groups, which this list does not recommend. Check that a group has a CNPJ number before giving.

Check a charity before you give

A government research institute (IPEA) map built from federal records, where you can look up nonprofits by name, location or CNPJ; it is not a complete list, and it does not certify any group.

Mapa das Organizações da Sociedade Civil

Give your time

Cruz Vermelha Brasileira
The national Red Cross society, which trains volunteers for first aid, disaster response and social work through its state branches.

United Nations Volunteers (UNV)
The UN's volunteer programme, with an online portal for assignments.

Give money, blood or a donation

Mesa Brasil Sesc
A national food bank program that collects surplus food and passes it to social agencies.

Associação Brasileira de Transplante de Órgãos (ABTO)

The national transplant society, with information on how to become an organ donor and talk to your family about it.

GIFE
The network of private social investors in Brazil, a source of information on how foundations and donors give.

In an emergency or a crisis

Centro de Valorização da Vida (CVV)
A nonprofit emotional support line, free and open at all hours by phone at 188.

Before you act

- After disasters such as floods, fake appeals and bank-transfer or Pix scams spread quickly, so check the name and CNPJ on the Receita Federal lookup before sending money.
- Give through organizations with a public record and a clear address, and be careful with appeals on social media that ask for Pix to a personal key.
- Foreign visitors should not do regular unpaid work on a tourist visa, and should check the rules with the host group and Brazilian consulate.

This list does not cover state and city volunteer programs or small neighborhood associations that have no online presence. Checked 2026-10-28. Listing an organization is not an endorsement, and none of them has endorsed this site. Some official sites block automatic checks, so a link may need a second try.

One thing worth knowing

Brazil's duty-to-assist offense sits in the Penal Code alongside a constitutional objective of a solidary society.

What this does not mean

All Brazilian statute descriptions are this guide's own English renderings of the Portuguese official texts, so the wording is not official. The compiled statute pages include amendments. Not legal advice. This is a plain-language summary of public sources, not legal advice, and it does not rank countries. No government named here has endorsed this site. Not reviewed by a lawyer. Statutes were read in public sources and may have changed. Last checked October 26, 2026.

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