

F.No. L/42/2018/NALSA
National Legal Services Authority

12/11, Jamnagar House,
Shahjahan Road, New Delhi
Cont. no. 011-23382778, e-mail: nalsa-dla@nic.in
Dated: 19th February, 2019

Tender Document

Subject: Request for proposal for an evaluation and impact assessment and scheme for Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs).

Online bids in two bid system are invited for and on behalf of NALSA from experienced and reputed agencies for **an evaluation and impact assessment and scheme for Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs)**. Manual bids shall not be accepted.

Tender document may be downloaded from department website www.nalsa.gov.in and Central Public Procurement Portal (CPPP) site <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> as per the schedule as given in CRITICAL DATE SHEET as under:

CRITICAL DATE SHEET

Published Date	19 th February, 2019 (17:30 hrs)
Bid Document Download Start Date	19 th February, 2019 (18:00 hrs)
Bid Submission Start Date	19 th February, 2019 (18:00 hrs)
Pre Bid Conference	11 th March, 2019 (11:30 hrs)
Bid Submission End Date	25 th March, 2019 (17:00 hrs)
Bid Opening Date	29 th March, 2019 (11:30 hrs)

SEARCHING FOR TENDER DOCUMENTS

1. There are various search options in-built on the CPP Portal, to facilitate bidders to search active tenders by parameters. These parameters include Tender ID, organization name, location, date etc. There is also an option of advanced search for tenders, wherein the bidders may combine a number of search parameters such as organization name, form of contract, location, date, other keywords etc. to search for a tender published on the CPP Portal.
2. Once the bidders have selected the tender they are interested in, they may download the required documents/ tender schedules. These tenders can be moved to the respective 'My Tenders' folder. This would enable the CPP Portal to intimate the bidders through SMS, e-mail in case there is any corrigendum issued to the tender document.
3. The bidder should make a note of the unique Tender ID assigned to each tender, in case they want to obtain any clarification and help from the Helpdesk.

PREPARATION OF BIDS

1. Bidder should take into account any corrigendum published on the tender document before submitting their bids.
2. The bidder should go through the tender advertisement and the tender document carefully to understand the documents required to be submitted as part of the bid. Please note the number of covers in which the bid documents have to be submitted, the number of documents - including the names and content of each of the document that need to be submitted. Any deviations may lead to rejection of the bid.
3. The Bidder should prepare the bid documents to be submitted in advance as indicated in the tender document / schedule; generally, the document format can be in PDF / XLS / RAR / DWF formats. Bid documents may be scanned with 100 dpi with black-and-white option.

4. To reduce the time and effort required in uploading the same set of standard documents which are required to be submitted as a part of every bid, a provision of uploading such standard documents (e.g. PAN card copy, annual reports, auditor certificates etc.) has been provided to the bidders. Bidders can use "My Space" area available to them to upload such documents. These documents may be directly submitted from the "My Space" area while submitting a bid, and need not be uploaded subsequently.

SUBMISSION OF BIDS

1. Bidder should log into the site well in advance for bid submission to enable him upload the bid in time i.e. on or before the bid submission time. Bidder will be responsible for any delay due to other issues.
2. The bidder has to digitally sign the required bid documents and upload them one by one as indicated in the tender document.
3. Bidder must select the payment option as "offline" to pay the tender fee of Rs. 1000/- in the form of Demand Draft in favour of "PAO, Department of Legal Affairs" payable at New Delhi and the EMD of Rs. 57,750/- (5% of the estimated tender value) should be submitted physically. The successful bidder would be required to submit the Performance Security @ 5% on the contract value.
4. Bidder should prepare the EMD as per the instructions specified in the tender document. The original should be posted/couriered/submitted in person to the Tender Processing Section, latest by the last date of bid submission. The details of the DD/any other accepted instrument, physically sent, should tally with the details available in the scanned copy and the data entered during bid submission time, else the uploaded bid may be rejected.
5. The serve time (which is displayed on the bidders' dashboard) will be considered as the standard time for referencing the deadlines for submission of the bids by

the bidders, opening of bids etc. The bidders should follow this time during bid submission.

6. All the documents being submitted by the bidders would be encrypted using PKI encryption techniques to ensure the secrecy of the data. The data entered cannot be viewed by unauthorized persons until the time of bid opening. The confidentiality of the bids is maintained using the secured Socket Layer 128 bit encryption technology. Data storage encryption of sensitive fields is done.
7. The uploaded tender documents become readable only after the tender opening by the authorized bid openers.
8. Upon the successful and timely submission of bids, the portal will give a successful bid submission message & a bid summary will be displayed with the bid no. and the date & time of submission of the bid with all other relevant details.
9. The bid summary has to be printed and kept as an acknowledgement of the submission of the bid. This acknowledgement may be used as an entry pass for any bid opening meetings.

ASSISTANCE TO BIDDERS

- Any queries relating to the tender document & the terms and conditions contained therein should be addressed to the Tender Inviting Authority for a tender or the relevant contact person indicated in the tender
- Any queries relating to the process of online bid submission or queries relating to CPP Portal in general may be directed to the 24x7 CPP Portal Helpdesk. The contact number for the helpdesk is 1800 233 7315

1. Invitation for tender

1.1 NALSA, hereby invites proposals for conducting **an evaluation and impact assessment and scheme for Para Legal Volunteers.**

1.2 The purpose of this RFP is to provide interested "bidders" with the necessary information to enable them to prepare and submit their responses for the services to be

rendered to NALSA in conformity with the terms and conditions listed in this document (**Annexure-A**).

1.3 Please note that all the information requested to be submitted in specific formats have to be provided only in the form and formats given in the RFP.

1.4 Responses should contain all the necessary information and incomplete information may lead to rejection of bids.

1.5 Bidders must keep watching our website/CPPP during the intervening period before and after submitting response to RFP as subsequent changes/clarifications, if any, related to RFP will only be posted on the web site/ CPPP.

1.6 Bidders must plan for presentation well in advance. NALSA will provide not more than 1 week to bidders for the presentation.

1.7 If you request for additional information, the same shall be provided expeditiously, but any delay in providing such information will not be considered a reason for extending the submission date of your proposal. For any queries you may write to nalsa-dla@nic.in

1.8 The proposal shall be valid for a period of Ninety (90) days only from the due date for receiving the proposal.

2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF EVALUATION

Towards fulfilling the Preambular promise of securing to all the citizens, Justice – social, economic and political, Article 39 A of the Constitution of India provides for free legal aid to the poor and weaker sections of the society, to promote justice on the basis of equal opportunity. To achieve the said vision of Access to Justice, the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 was enacted by the Parliament of India. It came into force on 9th November, 1995.

The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 creates a framework of Legal Services Authorities across the country. There is a Central Authority by the name of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) at the National level, State Legal Services Authorities (SLSA) at the State level, District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA) at the District level and Taluka Legal Services Committees (TLSC) at the Taluka/Sub-divisional level. NALSA's Vision and Mission are as follows:

Vision

The vision of NALSA is to promote an inclusive legal system in order to ensure fair and meaningful justice to the marginalized and disadvantaged sector.

Mission

To legally empower the marginalized and excluded groups of the society by providing effective legal representation, legal literacy and awareness and bridging the gap between the legally available benefits and the entitled beneficiaries.

To strengthen the system of Lok Adalats and other Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms in order to provide for informal, quick, inexpensive and effective resolution of dispute and minimize the load of adjudication on the overburdened judiciary.

As per the Scheme of the Act, NALSA is a Central Authority – an umbrella body to lay down policies under the Act which are to be implemented by other Legal Services Institutions throughout the country. The State Legal Services Authorities and District Legal Services Authorities are also statutory bodies having their own composition as laid down in the Act. The broad statutory functions of Legal Services Authorities are as under:

- Providing free legal aid and advice.
- Legal awareness and empowerment.
- Promoting and implementing ADR Mechanism.
- Devising and implementing Preventive and Strategic programmes.
- Intervention through social justice litigation.
- Implementing State funded victim compensation schemes for victims of crime.

Legal Services Authorities are manned by Judges at their respective levels and have empanelled lawyers and para legal volunteers as their workforce. There are about 63757 Panel Lawyers and around 69290 Para Legal Volunteers. Legal Services Authorities at State, District and Taluka level have Para Legal Volunteers. **The State-wise data of the Para Legal Volunteers is Annexure-B.** Scheme for Para Legal Volunteers (Revised) mentions about the framework relating to Para Legal Volunteer. It spells about the various aspects of Para Legal Volunteers such as selection of PLVs, empanelment process, mode of selection and training of PLVs. **The said Regulation is annexed as Annexure-C.**

Para Legal Volunteers constitute one of the important units through whom legal services are rendered to weaker and marginalised sections of society. Para Legal Volunteers play an important part in outreach activities. Para Legal Volunteers are deputed in Front Offices, Legal Services Clinics and also in various outreach programmes in the form of camps and campaigns. A glimpse of legal services being rendered at Front Offices can be adequately known from the **Front Offices Guidelines annexed as Annexure-D.** There are around 1100 Legal Services Clinics in Jails. Around 21000 Legal Services Clinics are in villages etc. Para Legal Volunteers visit these Clinics from two to four days as per the need based duty roster formulated by Legal Services Authorities along with Panel Lawyers. Long stay inmates in prisons have also been trained as Para Legal Volunteers who assist the jail visiting advocates.

3. Objectives of Evaluation:

The main purpose of the evaluation and impact assessment is to examine the framework of Para Legal Volunteer Scheme with the view to know as to whether the said framework of Para Legal Volunteers for all outreach activities is

appropriate, effective and meaningful for rendering legal services to marginalised and weaker sections of society. It is expected that evaluation will identify the gaps and make recommendation for making improvements and restructuring the existing framework or propose a new framework in place of the present scheme with an aim to formulate effective mechanisms of rendering legal services. It is also expected that assessment of the impact made by the Para Legal Volunteers will be made to know as to whether at the grassroots para legal volunteers have remain successful or not in meeting the basic legal needs. The evaluation and impact assessment has seven main objectives:

- To evaluate institutional and operational framework of Scheme for Para Legal Volunteers.
- To assess and evaluate the existing practices in selection and capacity building of Para Legal Volunteers.
- To assess the existing practices with regard to engagement of Para Legal Volunteers in various legal services activities.
- To assess the adequacy of existing monitoring and reporting mechanism relating to Para Legal Volunteers.
- To assess the relevance of the present scheme in the existing framework of Legal Services Authorities.
- To evaluate results and impacts, including an assessment of sustainability.
- To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of resource use.

It is expected that the evaluation and impact assessment exercise will generate a knowledge product that can contribute towards improved design with regard to the existing scheme for Para Legal Volunteers or an effective and meaningful alternative framework.

4. Scope of the Required Work:

The scope of the evaluation and impact assessment is closely related to the objectives mentioned above. The evaluation and impact assessment shall be conducted in about seven districts selected out of 36 State Legal Services Authorities. The evaluation shall particularly assess the following:

- Approach in selecting the Para Legal Volunteers.
- The factors which are kept in view for maintaining a panel of particular number PLVs.
- The quality and the quantity of capacity building programmes for PLVs.
- The suitability of PLVs for preventive, strategic and outreach access to justice programmes.
- Approach in engaging them in Front Offices and Legal Services Clinics.
- Assessment as to the suitability of PLVs in Front Offices and Legal Services Clinics.
- Approach in ensuring and maintaining dedicated and committed PLVs.
- Expertise and experience of PLVs in rendering legal services.
- Quality of services rendered by PLVs.
- Effectiveness of the existing monitoring mechanisms.
- The reporting mechanisms in place for reporting about the various legal services rendered by PLVs.
- Framework relating to submission of bills by PLVs and its timely payment to them.
- Issuance of duty rosters and maintenance of its records.
- Criteria for deputing PLVs in campaigns and camps.
- Impact of legal services rendered by PLVs.
- The effectiveness and relevance of the existing framework relating to Para Legal Volunteers mentioned in the Scheme.

5. Approach and Methodology:

The Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 along with various Rules and Regulations are available on the websites of NALSA and almost all the State Legal Services Authorities. This may be used as a guide during the course of evaluation. The evaluation approach will combine methods such as interviews, field visits, documentation review, group discussion etc. to assess all the aspects of Para Legal

Volunteers including their selection, capacity building, engagement, monitoring and management and as to whether this workforce has resulted in accomplishing the objectives of the Legal Services Authorities Act and making an impact at the grass roots. The Legal Services Authorities at various levels will cooperate in providing the documents relating to the various legal services activities. It is expected that evaluator will conduct interviews with all the relevant stake holders including the beneficiaries.

6. Deliverables:

The Evaluators are expected to deliver the following:

- The Report should objectively evaluate the relevance and the role of Para Legal Volunteer in delivery of legal services to with specific findings and evidence.
- The evaluation is also expected to assess the impact made by Para Legal Volunteers in meeting the legal needs of such sections of society.
- Recommendations are expected to suggest course corrections, additions or any other improvements to the existing operational framework with regard to Para Legal Volunteers.
- Recommendations on best practices followed by various legal services authorities to further strengthen the rendering of legal services in an effective and competent manner through this human resource of Para Legal Volunteers.
- Quality aspect in rendering legal services by Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) is expected to be delved into intensively, and the suggestive framework for better design touching upon this aspect is expected in report.

7. Format of Technical Proposal

7.1 The duly signed technical proposal is to be submitted in the following format only:

1. Project Title
2. Name of the Organization
3. Head of the organization
4. Contact Details including email
5. Introduction of the organization, indicating past experience in the subject area (in not more than 1 page)
6. Information pertaining to the registration of the organization; attach a copy of the organization's Registration Certificate
7. Justification for applying for this project
8. Description of team (team leader, team members) with brief backgrounds of team members in the following format (also attached detailed CV of each team member)

Name	Designation	Qualifications	Experience (No. of Years)	Description of the tasks to be performed

9. The proposed methodology of the evaluation. The methodology must include the following elements:

- Criteria for identification of Sample.
- Collection of Data
- Primary data
- Secondary data
- Analysis of data through the questionnaire

10. Achieving desired objectives as mentioned at Section 3 as above.

11. A table of deliverables/results against the proposed activities, outputs and objectives for the survey

12. The time schedule with milestones / performance targets/ Work Plan. **In any case, the project is to be completed within three months.**

13. Justification to fulfilment of technical selection criteria.

14. Provide information on whether the project will be sub-contracted

15. Provide the names and contact details (including the name of the person-in-charge) and telephone numbers of 2 funding agencies that have supported the work of the organization in the last 3 years

16. Provide the following information:

- Has the agency submitting the proposal or any of its collaborating partners been penalized by any organization for poor quality of work or breach of contract in the last five years? (Yes/No)
- Has the agency submitting the proposal or any of its collaborating partners ever failed to complete any work awarded to it by any public entity/ Government Organization in last five years? (Yes/No)
- Has the agency submitting proposal or any of its collaborating partners been blacklisted by any Government Department/Public Sector Undertaking in the last five years? (Yes/No)

19. Statement expressing that the applying agency and its collaborating partners, if any, unconditionally accept all the terms of this RFP.

8. Eligibility Criteria:

S.No.	Criterion	Supporting documents to be submitted as Proof
1	Agency (consulting, research institution, policy research institution, academic institution, registered societies, market research agency etc.) should have been operating in India for a period of at least 5 years out of which 2 years must be in evaluation/assessment of access to justice on the date of the proposal submission with registered/fully operational office in Delhi /NCR	

2	Agency should have annual turnover of at least Rs. 5.00 Crores or more in each of the last four financial years (2017-18, 2016-17, 2015-16, 2014-15). This will not be applicable to the govt. research institutions/academic institutions, universities, etc. and non-profit organisations.	Copy of the audited profit and loss account/balance sheet for the last three Financial Years
3	Agency should have completed at least 5 empirical assessment studies in the last 5 years. Work orders of such studies of more than 3 lacs with regard to it be also submitted along with the tender documents.	

9. Pre-Bid meeting

- To clarify issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage, the pre-bid meeting shall be held at Conference Hall, National Legal Services Authority, 12/11, Jam Nagar House, New Delhi as per critical date sheet.
- Designated representative from the bidding agency may attend the pre-bid meeting. The bidder is requested, as far as possible, to submit any questions in writing/email, to reach the Department not later than two days before the meeting. It may not be practicable at the meeting to answer questions received late, but responses will be transmitted over email for questions received late.
- Any modification of the bidding documents that may become necessary as a result of the pre-bid meeting shall be made by the Department exclusively through the issue of a Corrigendum and not through the minutes of the pre-bid meeting.

10. Bid Evaluation

- The online Technical bids will be opened in presence of competent authority on behalf of National Legal Services Authority, 12/11 Jamnagar House, New

Delhi. The bidders or their authorized '-' representatives may be present, if they so desire.

- The NALSA, through bid evaluation committee, shall evaluate, and shortlist technically qualified offers. The technically qualified bidders will make a presentation on their methodology & execution strategy, the date and venue of which will be communicated separately. The cut off for technical bids is 75%. The financial bids will be opened later in a pre-decided date and venue in the presence of competent authority of the NALSA and successful bidder is selected for the placement of contract through the bid evaluation committee.
- The weights given to Technical and Financial proposals will be in the ratio of 60:40.
- NALSA reserves the right to accept or reject any offer without assigning any reason whatsoever.

11. Technical evaluation criteria: (Max marks: 100)

S.No.	Technical Evaluation	Max Marks	Marks system	Mark Reference
1	Relevant experience evaluating projects.	Prior 25 of	5 marks for each similar assignment	A self-attested certificate listing [assignment of similar nature executed in the past along with the Work orders for each assignment confirming year, area of activity and contact details of the client.(In case of all conditions are not met, a certificate from the bidder mentioning any missing detail should be provided.)
2	Experience of working with government agencies	15	Number of Projects executed for Central/ State Government /PSU. Three marks for each assignment	A self-attested certificate listing the details of the project executed (Name, Area, Location, period, each details of client etc.)
3	Experience qualifications	20	Team members who would be working on	CV of the team members. As per Rule 171 (v) of GFR, bid

	& of the proposed team members		the assignment have M.B.A or bachelors plus M.B.A qualification or Post-Graduate degree in Economics or Statistics or social science. In addition, Legal advisors in the team will be preferred. 5 Marks for each qualified team member subject to maximum of 20 marks.	evaluation Committee of the NALSA shall be reviewing the CVs and will interview the Team Leaders and the 5 leading Members of the evaluating team as shortlisted by the evaluators.
4	Quality of the proposal submitted & alignment of the proposal with the ToR, project objectives & deliverables	15	Understanding, expertise & the experience, as mentioned in the proposal shall be reviewed and scored.	Based on proposal, evaluation shall be done by the bid evaluation Committee of NALSA
4	Methodology	25	The methodology for sampling, selection of establishments and the process for conducting the said study. Coverage pattern also to be assessed.	Based on proposal, evaluation shall be done by the bid evaluation Committee of NALSA

12. Financial evaluation criteria: (Max marks: 100)

- Financial bid should be duly signed and should list all costs associated with the Assignment for evaluation. These normally cover; remuneration for staff (in the field and at headquarters), accommodation (per diem, housing), transportation (for mobilization and demobilization), equipment (vehicles, office equipment, furniture, and supplies), office rent, insurance, printing of documents, surveys etc.; The Financial bid must broadly separately provide all the above heads and the taxes, duties (factoring in any future changes in nature of taxes) etc. Along with the grand total in one consolidated figure

written as Indian Rupees in words and figures . The grand total will be considered for the financial evaluation.

- At the first instance, the technical bids shall be opened and evaluated by a bid evaluation committee of the NALSA. Financial bids of only the shortlisted technically acceptable offers shall be opened for further evaluation and ranking before awarding the contract.
- The proposal with the lowest cost will be given a financial score of 100 and other proposals will be given the financial scores that are inversely proportional to their prices. The financial proposal shall be allocated a weightage of 20%. For working out the final score, NALSA shall be using the following formula:
- Final Score: $\{60\% \text{ of } 100 \times [(\text{Technical score}) / (\text{Max Technical score})]\} + \{40\% \text{ of } 100 \times [(\text{Min Financial Bid}) / (\text{Financial quote})]\}$
- The proposal will be ranked in terms of total points. The proposals with total highest points will be considered for award of contract.

General Terms of Contract

1. Legal status

The agency/contractor shall be considered as having the legal status of an independent contractor vis-a-vis NALSA. The agency's personnel, collaborating partners and sub-contractors shall not be considered in any respect as being the employees or agents of NALSA.

2. Source of instructions

The agency shall neither seek nor accept instructions from any authority external to NALSA in connection with the performance of its services under this contract. The agency shall refrain from any action which may adversely affect NALSA and shall fulfil its commitments with the fullest regard to the interests of NALSA.

However, the feedback from the Secretaries DLSA, Panel Lawyers and beneficiaries will be taken by face-to-face interview or with other effective methodology for making assessment.

3. Agency's responsibility for employees

The agency shall be responsible for the professional and technical competence of its employees and will select, for work under this contract, reliable individuals who will perform effectively in the implementation of this contract, respect the local customs, and conform to a high standard of moral and ethical conduct.

4. Assignment

Apart from the consortium/ tie-ups existing at, the time of tendering and specified in the proposal, the agency shall not assign, transfer, pledge or make other disposition of this contract or any part thereof, or any of the contractor's rights,

claims or obligations under this contract except with the prior written consent of NALSA.

5. Sub-contracting

In the event the agency requires the services of sub-contractors, the agency shall obtain the prior written approval and clearance of NALSA for all sub-contractors. The approval of NALSA of a sub-contractor shall not relieve the agency of any of its obligations under this contract. The terms of any sub-contract shall be subject to and conform with the provisions of this RFP.

6. Officials not to benefit The agency warrants that no official of NALSA has received or will be offered by the agency any direct or indirect benefit arising from this contract or the award thereof. The agency agrees that breach of this provision IS a breach of an essential term of this contract.

7. Regular functioning of Courts

The evaluation by the evaluators shall be carried out courteously without causing any impediments in the smooth functioning of DLSA officers or courts etc.

8. Indemnification

The agency shall indemnify, hold and save harmless, and defend, at its own expense, NALSA, its officials, agents, servants and employees from and against all suits, claims, demands, and liability of any nature or kind, including their costs and expenses, arising out of acts or omissions of the agency, or the agency's employees, officers, agents or sub-contractors, in the performance of this contract. This provision shall extend, inter alia, to claims and liability in the nature of workmen's compensation, products liability and liability arising out of the use of patented inventions or devices, copyrighted material or other intellectual property by the agency, its employees, officers, agents, servants or sub-contractors. The obligations under this article do not lapse upon termination of this contract.

9. Encumbrances/liens

The agency shall not cause or permit any lien, attachment or other encumbrance by any person to be placed on file or to remain on file in any public office or on file with NALSA against any monies due or to become due for any work done or materials furnished under this contract, or by reason of any other claim or demand against the agency.

10. Title to equipment

Title to any equipment and supplies that may be furnished by NALSA shall rest with NALSA and any such equipment shall be returned to NALSA at the conclusion of this contract or when no longer needed by the agency. Such equipment, when returned to NALSA, shall be in the same condition as when delivered to the agency, subject to normal wear and tear. The agency shall be liable to compensate NALSA for equipment determined to be damaged or degraded beyond normal wear and tear.

11. Use of name, emblem or official seal of NALSA, GOI

The agency shall not in any manner whatsoever use the name, emblem or official seal of NALSA or NALSA in connection with its business or otherwise, without written approval from the concerned party.

12. Confidentiality and terms of use

All maps, drawings, photographs, mosaics, plans, reports, recommendations, estimates, documents and all other data compiled by or received by the agency under this contract shall be the property of NALSA, shall be treated as confidential.

(a) Confidentiality clause: the agency (and its subcontractors) agrees and accepts that the technology, ingredients, information, software and expertise deployed under the project shall be treated as the exclusive property of the NALSA.

(b) Any information about the legal cases, litigants, judiciary, processes, ingredients supplied by Department, Judiciary and associated parties are to be

solely utilized by the Agency for the evaluation purposes only. The Agency shall not under any circumstance reveal any information related to project and its evaluation to any third party without prior written permission of the NALSA.

(c) The Agency further agrees and undertakes to not Copy, distribute, reveal, modify, disassemble, decompile, or reverse engineer the information and process related to NALSA, without the written consent of the NALSA.

(d) In the event that agency comes into knowledge of proprietary or intellectual property information in any form related to the project it undertakes to keep confidential all such information.

(e) That the Agency unconditionally agrees that the intellectual property, information, ingredients or processes and information about the project cannot be sold, revealed or shared with to any third party without prior approval of the NALSA.

(f) The agency may not communicate at any time to any other person, government or authority external to NALSA, any information known to it by reason of its association with NALSA which has not been made public except with the authorization of NALSA nor shall the agency at any time use such information to private advantage. These obligations do not lapse upon termination of this contract.

13. Settlement of disputes

Amicable settlement

The parties shall use their best efforts to settle amicably any dispute, controversy or claim arising out of, or relating to this contract or the breach, termination or invalidity thereof.

Arbitration

Unless, any such dispute, controversy or claim between the parties arising out of or relating to this contract or the breach, termination or invalidity thereof is settled amicably under the preceding paragraph of this clause within sixty (60) days after receipt by one party of the other party's request for such amicable settlement, such dispute, controversy or claim shall be referred by either party to arbitration in accordance with the Indian Arbitration and Conciliation Act, 1996.

The parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such controversy, claim or dispute. The Parties shall jointly appoint a Sole Arbitrator whose decision the parties shall recognize and respect as final and binding. The venue of arbitration proceedings shall be New Delhi. Any or all disputes arising out of this Agreement shall be subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts in Delhi.

14. Copyright

The study will be the property of NALSA. Appropriate logos will be used and copyright information will also be accordingly mentioned stating that the material may be used after acknowledgement.

15. Adherence to timelines

The agency understands and agrees that this research study is to be conducted in a time bound manner and any delay on its part may impact the funding for the research study being given to them. Funding will not be released beyond 31st March 2019. NALSA will not be responsible for any release of monies after this date.

16. ENTIRE AGREEMENT:

This Agreement and the Annexures hereto represent the entire Agreement as to the subject matter hereof and supersedes any prior understandings between the parties on the subject-matter hereof.

17. FORCE MAJEURE:

Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein contained, nothing herein shall apply if either party is prevented from discharging its obligation hereunder due to any cause arising from or related to any act of God, war, riot, fire, civil commotion, strike lock out or any or orders of quasi-governmental or Courts, local authority or any similar cause.

Annexure-B

S. No.	SLSAs	PLVs			
		Total	Male	Female	Others
1	Andhra Pradesh	2303	1462	841	0
2	Arunachal Pradesh	1065	665	400	0
3	Assam	826	494	332	0
4	Bihar	4368	3392	976	0
5	Chhattisgarh	3526	2238	1288	0
6	Goa	199	67	132	0
7	Gujarat	2921	1818	1076	27
8	Haryana	1546	920	626	0
9	Himachal Pradesh	5786	4169	1617	0
10	Jammu and Kashmir	559	360	199	0
11	Jharkhand	1360	890	470	0
12	Karnataka	2968	1612	1346	10
13	Kerala	2461	825	1617	19
14	Madhya Pradesh	6286	3862	2423	1
15	Maharashtra	5049	3182	1856	11
16	Manipur	903	509	394	0
17	Meghalaya	425	310	115	0
18	Mizoram	315	193	122	0
19	Nagaland	165	117	48	0
20	Orissa	4979	3195	1763	21
21	Punjab	2004	1391	612	1
22	Rajasthan	4192	3149	1042	1
23	Sikkim	429	206	223	0
24	Tamil Nadu	3862	2278	1538	46
25	Telangana	2629	1473	1149	7
26	Tripura	494	347	147	0
27	Uttar Pradesh	3099	2336	749	14
28	Uttarakhand	947	586	361	0
29	West Bengal	1843	1129	693	21
30	Andaman & Nicobar	96	53	43	0
31	Chandigarh	31	17	13	1
32	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	3	1	2	0
33	Daman & Diu	59	19	40	0
34	Delhi	1281	672	606	3
35	Lakshadweep	45	15	30	0
36	Puducherry	266	156	110	0
	Total	69290	44108	24999	4183

**THE NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY (FREE AND
COMPETENT LEGAL SERVICES) REGULATIONS, 2010**
(As amended vide notification F.No. L/61/10/NALSA dated 22.10.2018)

- In exercise of the powers conferred by section 29 of the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (39 of 1987) and in pursuance of the provisions in section 4 of the Act to make available free and competent legal services to the persons entitled thereto under section 12 of the said Act, the Central Authority hereby makes the following regulations, namely: -

1. Short title, extent and commencement. – (1) These regulations may be called the National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010.

(2) They shall be applicable to Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, State Legal Services Authorities, High Court Legal Services Committees, District Legal Services Authorities, and Taluk Legal Services Committees in India.

(3) They shall come into force from the date of their publication in the Official Gazette.

2. Definitions. – (1) In these regulations, unless the context otherwise requires, -

(a) “Act” means the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 (39 of 1987);

(b) “Form” means a Form annexed to these Regulations;

(c) “Front Office” means a room in the Legal Services Institution where legal services are made available;

(d) “Legal Practitioner” shall have the meaning assigned to it in clause (i) of section 2 of the Advocates Act, 1961 (25 of 1961);

(e) “Legal Services Institution” means the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, a State Legal Services Authority, the High Court Legal Services Committee, District Legal Services Authority or the Taluk Legal Services Committee, as the case may be;

¹(ea) “Monitoring and Mentoring Committee” means the Committees set up under regulation 10;

(eb) “Panel Lawyer” means a legal practitioner empanelled as a Panel lawyer under regulation 8;

(f) “Para-Legal Volunteer” means a para-legal volunteer trained ²under the ‘National Legal Services Authority Scheme for Para Legal Volunteers’ and empanelled by a Legal Services Institution;

³(fa) “Retainer Lawyer” means a Panel Lawyer designated as the Retainer Lawyer under sub-regulation (9) of regulation 8;

¹ Substituted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

² Inserted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

³ Inserted vide notification dated 31/7/2012, published in the Gazette of India on 25/8/2012.

(g) “Secretary” means the Secretary of the Legal Services Institution;

(h) “Section” means the section of the Act;

(i) “State regulation” means regulation made by the State Authorities under the Act.

2. All other words and expressions used but not defined in these regulations shall have the same meanings assigned to them in the Act.

3. Application for legal services.- (1) An application for legal services may be presented preferably in Form-I in the local language or English.

(2) The applicant may furnish a summary of his grievances for which he seeks legal services, in a separate sheet along with the application.

(3) An application, though not in Form-I, may also be entertained, if reasonably explains the facts to enable the applicant to seek legal services.

(4) If the applicant is illiterate or unable to give the application on his or her own, the Legal Services Institutions may make arrangement for helping the applicant to fill up the application form and to prepare a note of his or her grievances.

(5) Oral requests for legal services may also be entertained in the same manner as an application under sub-regulation (1) and (2).

(6) An applicant advised by the para-legal volunteers, legal aid clubs, legal aid clinics and voluntary social service institutions shall also be considered for free legal services.

(7) Requests received through e-mails and interactive on-line facility also may be considered for free legal services after verification of the identity of the applicant and on ensuring that he or she owns the authorship of the grievances projected.

4. Legal Services Institution to have a front office.- (1) All Legal Services Institutions shall have a front office to be manned by ⁴[a Retainer Lawyer on rotational basis and] one or more para-legal volunteers available during office hours.

⁵Provided that persons with the qualification of Masters degree in Social Work or Diploma or Masters’ degree in psychiatry or psychology from any recognised institute or university may also be called to the front office as and when necessary.

⁶(2) *****

⁷(3) The Para-Legal Volunteers in the front office shall render services such as issuing of simple notices, drafting of applications and petitions, providing basic information on the course of action to be taken

⁴ Inserted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

⁵ Inserted vide notification dated 31/7/2012, published in the Gazette of India on 25/8/2012.

⁶ Omitted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

⁷ Inserted vide notification dated 31/7/2012, published in the Gazette of India on 25/8/2012.

in a situation and to act as an intermediary between the persons in need of legal services and the legal services institutions to enable such persons to gain access to justice.

⁸(4) The Para-Legal Volunteers or the panel lawyer or the retainer lawyer, as the case may be, in the front office may obtain secretarial assistance from the staff of the Legal Services Institutions.

⁹(5) *****

¹⁰**5. Proof of entitlement of free legal services.** – A self-certificate of the applicant, along with self-attested copy of relevant documents or certificates, if any, that he falls under the categories of persons entitled to free legal services under Section 12 of the Act shall ordinarily be sufficient.

¹¹(2) *****

¹²(3) *****

6. Consequences of false or untrue details furnished by the applicant. –The applicant shall be informed that if free legal services have been obtained by furnishing incorrect or false information or in a fraudulent manner, the legal services shall be stopped forthwith and that the expenses incurred by the Legal Services Institutions shall be recoverable from him or her.

¹³**7. Scrutiny and evaluation of the application for free legal services.**– (1) The application for legal services, for eligibility of the applicant and existence of a prima facie case to prosecute or to defend, shall be scrutinised by the Member-Secretary or Secretary, as the case may be, or any officer, deputed by him:

Provided that a defendant in a civil case and an accused or a convict in a criminal case shall be deemed to have prima facie case to defend or to file an appeal against his conviction and sentence:

Provided further that in case, there is some difficulty to determine the prima facie case to prosecute, the Member-Secretary or Secretary may for this purpose, seek opinion from a panel lawyer having more than seven years standing at the Bar:

Provided further that in case of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee, the Secretary shall seek opinion from an Advocate having more than fifteen years standing at the Bar.

(2) A decision on application for legal services shall be taken immediately, but not more than seven days from the date of receipt of the application.

⁸ Inserted vide notification dated 31/7/2012, published in the Gazette of India on 25/8/2012.

⁹ Omitted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

¹⁰ Substituted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

¹¹ Omitted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

¹² Omitted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

¹³ Substituted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

(3) If the applicant is not covered under the categories mentioned in section 12, he or she shall be advised to seek assistance from any other body or person rendering free legal services either voluntarily or under any other scheme.

(4) The Legal Services Institution shall maintain a list of such agencies, institutions or persons who have expressed willingness to render free legal services.

(5) Any person aggrieved by the decision or order of the Member-Secretary or the Secretary, as the case may be, he may prefer appeal to the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution and the decision or order in appeal shall be final.

(6) In case the Member-Secretary or Secretary of the Legal Services Institution decides to provide legal services through a panel lawyer, the choice of the panel lawyer, if expressed by the applicant, may be considered.

¹⁴8. Selection of legal practitioners as panel lawyers. – (1) Every Legal Services Institution shall invite applications from legal practitioners for their empanelment as panel lawyers and such applications shall be accompanied with proof of the professional experience with special reference to the type of cases which the applicant-legal practitioners may prefer to be entrusted with.

(2) The applications received under sub-regulation (1) shall be scrutinised and selection of the panel lawyers shall be made by the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution in consultation with the Attorney General [for the Supreme Court], Advocate General [for the High Court], District Attorney or Government Pleader [for District and Taluka level] and the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee set up under regulation 10:

Provided that the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution may also suo moto empanel any legal practitioner;

(3) No legal practitioner having less than three years' experience at the Bar shall ordinarily be empaneled.

(4) District Legal Services Authorities and Taluk Legal Services Committees shall get the panel approved from the Executive Chairman of the State Legal Services Authority.

(5) The Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution shall take into consideration the competency, integrity, suitability, and experience of lawyers for the empanelment.

(6) There may be representation of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes, women and differently abled lawyers in the panel.

(7) The Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution may maintain separate panels for dealing with different types of cases like Civil, Criminal, Constitutional Law, Environmental Law, Labour Laws, Matrimonial disputes, Juvenile Justice, etc.

¹⁴ Substituted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

(8) The Member-Secretary or Secretary, as the case may be, may assign a case to a panel lawyer of a subject matter other than for which he has been empanelled.

(9) The Chairman of the Legal Services Institution may, in consultation with the Executive Chairman of the State Legal Services Authority or National Legal Services Authority, as the case may be, prepare a list of legal practitioners from among the panel lawyers to be designated as Retainers.

(10) The Retainer lawyers shall be selected for a period fixed by the Executive Chairman on rotation basis or by any other method specified by the Executive Chairman;

(11) The strength of Retainer lawyers shall not exceed, -

- (a) twenty in the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee;
- (b) fifteen in the High Court Legal Services Committee;
- (c) ten in the District Legal Authority;
- (d) five in the Taluk Legal Services Committee.

(12) The honorarium payable to Retainer lawyer shall not be less than, -

- (a) rupees forty thousand per month in the case of Supreme Court Legal Services Committee;
- (b) rupees twenty five thousand per month in the case of State Legal Services Authority or High Court Legal Services Committee;
- (c) rupees fifteen thousand per month in the case of District Legal Services Authority;
- (d) rupees ten thousand per month in the case of the Taluk Legal Services Committee:

Provided that the honorarium specified in this sub-regulation is in addition to the honorarium or fee payable by the Legal Services Institution for each case entrusted to the Retainer lawyer.

(13) The panel prepared under sub-regulation (2) for the period of three years shall also be reviewed and updated periodically by the Executive Chairman or the Chairman, as the case may be, keeping in view the performance of the panel lawyers.

(14) The Legal Services Institution shall be at liberty for withdrawing any case from a Retainer Panel Lawyer during any stage of the proceedings.

(15) If a panel lawyer is desirous of withdrawing from a case he shall state the reasons thereof to the Member-Secretary or the Secretary, as the case may be, and the panel lawyer may be permitted to do so by an order.

(16) The panel lawyers shall not ask for or receive any fee, remuneration or any valuable consideration in any manner, from the person to whom he has rendered legal services under these regulations.

(17) If the panel lawyer engaged is not performing satisfactorily or has acted contrary to the object and spirit of the Act and these regulations, the Legal Services Institution shall take appropriate steps including withdrawal of the case from such lawyer and his removal from the panel.

(18) The panel lawyers shall undergo training periodically as per modules prepared by the National Legal Services Authority and the State Legal Services Authority.

(19) The participation in the training programme shall be a relevant consideration for the retention or continuation of panel lawyers.

¹⁵**9. Legal services by way of legal advice, consultation, drafting and conveyancing.** - (1) The Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution may maintain a separate panel of senior lawyers, law firms, retired judicial officers, mediators, conciliators and law professors in the law universities or law colleges for providing legal advice and other legal services like drafting and conveyancing.

(2) The Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution, as the case may be, may maintain a separate panel of retired senior bureaucrats, senior executives, retired police officials, doctors, engineers, psychiatrists, marriage counsellors, chartered accountants, educationists and other experts of the specialised field for legal services and honorarium payable to them shall be decided by the Executive Chairman of State Legal Services Authority or the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Committee, as the case may be.

(3) The Member-Secretary may send a request to Senior Advocates to volunteer their pro bono professional services for rendering advice as and when required.”.

¹⁶**10. Monitoring and Mentoring Committee.** - (1) Every Legal Services Institution shall set up a Monitoring and Mentoring Committee for close monitoring of the court based legal services rendered and the progress of the cases in the legal aided matters and to guide and advise the panel lawyers.

(2) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee at the level of the Supreme Court shall consist of, -

(i) a sitting or retired judge of the Supreme Court or a Senior Advocate as may be nominated by the Chairman, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee;

(ii) Secretary, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee;

(iii) a renowned Academician or an Advocate-on-Record having ten years of practice to be nominated by the Chairman of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee;

(iv) The Legal Service Counsel-cum-Consultant, Supreme Court Legal Services Committee.

(3) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee at the level of the High Court shall consist of, -

(i) a sitting or retired Judge of the High Court or a Senior Advocate as may be nominated by the Chairman, High Court Legal Services Committee;

(ii) Secretary, High Court Legal Services Committee.

(4) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee at the State or District Legal Services Authority shall consist of, -

¹⁵ Substituted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

¹⁶ Substituted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

- (i) Member-Secretary or Secretary of the Legal Services Institution, as the case may be;
 - (ii) one serving judicial officer from the State Higher Judicial Service;
 - (iii) one retired judicial officer or one Advocate of fifteen years' standing or more.
- (5) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee at the Taluk Legal Services Committee shall consist of, –
- (i) Chairman of the Taluk Legal Services Committee;
 - (ii) one retired judicial officer;
 - (iii) one advocate of 10 years standing or more.
- (6) The members of the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee shall render their services on the days as may be required and fixed by the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution and the members except serving Judicial Officers shall be paid the honorarium as fixed by the Executive Chairman.
- ¹⁷**11. Procedure of the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee.** - (1) Whenever court based legal aid is provided to an applicant, the Member-Secretary or Secretary as the case may be, shall send the details in Form II to the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee at the earliest.
- (2) The Legal Services Institution shall provide adequate staff and infrastructure to the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee for maintaining the records of the day-to-day progress of the legal aided cases.
- (3) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee shall assist the Legal Services Institution in organising training programmes for panel lawyers from time to time to enhance the skill of the panel lawyers.
- (4) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee shall mentor the panel lawyers and guide them in providing quality legal services.
- (5) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee shall maintain a register for legal aided cases for monitoring the day-to-day progress of the case and the end result (success or failure) in respect of cases for which legal aid is allowed and the said register shall be scrutinised every month by the Member-Secretary or Secretary or the Chairman, as the case may be.
- (6) The Legal Services Institution may request the Presiding Officer of the court to allow access to the registers maintained by the court for ascertaining the progress of the cases.
- (7) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee shall keep a watch on the progress of the case by calling for reports from the panel lawyers within such time as may be determined by the Committee.
- (8) If the progress of the case is not satisfactory, the Committee may advise the Legal Services Institution to take appropriate steps.

¹⁷ Substituted vide notification dated 22/10/2018, published in the Gazette of India on 25/10/2018.

(9) The Committees shall meet at least once in a fortnight.

(10) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee may meet as and when the meeting is convened by the Member-Secretary or the Secretary as the case may be.

12. Monitoring and Mentoring Committee to submit bi-monthly reports.— (1) The Monitoring and Mentoring Committee shall submit bi-monthly reports containing its independent assessment on the progress of each and every legal aid case and the performance of the panel lawyer or Retainer lawyer, to the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution.

(2) After evaluating the reports by the Committee, the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution shall decide the course of action to be taken in each case.

(3) It shall be the duty of the Member-Secretary or Secretary of the Legal Services Institution to place the reports of the Monitoring Committee before the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution and to obtain orders.

13. Financial assistance. — (1) If a case for which legal aid has been granted requires additional expenditure like payment of court fee, the fee payable to the court appointed commissions, for summoning witnesses or documents, expenses for obtaining certified copies etc., the Legal Services Institution may take urgent steps for disbursement of the requisite amount on the advice of the panel lawyer or Monitoring and Mentoring Committee.

(2) In the case of appeal or revision the Legal Services Institution may bear the expenses for obtaining certified copies of the judgment and case records.

14. Payment of fee to the panel lawyers. - (1) Panel lawyers shall be paid fee in accordance with the Schedule of fee, as approved under the State regulations.

(2) The State Legal Services Authority and other Legal Services Institution shall effect periodic revision of the honorarium to be paid to panel lawyers for the different types of services rendered by them in legal aid cases.

(3) As soon as the report of completion of the proceedings is received from the panel lawyer, the Legal Services Institution shall, without any delay, pay the

15. Special engagement of senior advocates in appropriate cases. - (1) If the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee or Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution is of the opinion that services of senior advocate, though not included in the approved panel of lawyers, has to be provided in any particular case the Legal Services Institution may engage such senior advocate.

(2) Notwithstanding anything contained in the State regulations, the Executive Chairman or Chairman of the Legal Services Institution may decide the honorarium of such senior advocate.

¹⁸[*****]

¹⁸ Omitted vide notification dated 6/8/2014, published in the Gazette of India on 18/10/2014.

16. Evaluation of the legal aid cases by the National Legal Services Authority and State Legal Services Authorities. – (1) The Supreme Court Legal Services Committee shall send copies of the bi-monthly reports of the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee of the Supreme Court Legal Services Committee to the Central Authority.

(2) The High Court Legal Services Committees, the State Legal Services Authorities shall submit copies of the bi-monthly reports of their Monitoring and Mentoring Committees to their Patron-in-Chief.

(3) The District Legal Services Authorities and Taluk Legal Services Committees shall submit copies of the bi-monthly reports of their Monitoring and Mentoring Committees to the Executive Chairman of the State Legal Services Authority.

(4) The State Legal Services Authorities shall also send consolidated half- yearly reports of the Monitoring Committees, indicating the success or failure of each of the legal aided cases, to the Central Authority.

(5) In appropriate cases, the Executive Chairman of the National Legal Services Authority may nominate and authorise the members of its Central Authority to supervise, monitor or advise the Legal Services Institution for effective and successful implementation of these regulations.

FORM –I

National Legal Services Authority
(Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, -2010
(see regulation-3)

The Form of Application for Legal Services
(This may be prepared in the regional language)

Registration No.

1. Name :
2. Permanent Address :
3. Contact Address with phone no. if any, e-mail ID, if any :
4. Whether the applicant belongs to the category
of persons mentioned in section -12 of the Act :
5. Monthly income of the applicant
:
6. Whether proof has been produced in support of
income/eligibility u/s 12 of the Act :
7. Nature of legal aid or advise required :
8. A brief statement of the case, if court based legal services
is required :

.....
Signature of the applicant

Place:

Date:

Form-II

*National Legal Services Authority
(Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulation, 2010
(see regulation-II)*

Information furnished to the Monitoring and Mentoring Committee about the legal Services provided

- (i) Name of the Legal Services Institution :
- (ii) Legal aid application number and date on which legal aid was given. :
- (iii) Name of the legal aid applicant :
- (iv) Nature of case :
(civil, criminal, constitutional law etc.).
- (v) Name and roll number of the lawyer assigned to the applicant :
- (vi) Name of the Court in which the case is to be filed/defended :
- (vii) The date of engaging the panel lawyer :
- (viii) Whether any monetary assistance like, court fee, advocate commission fee, copying charges etc. has been given in advance? :
- (ix) Whether the case requires any interim orders or appointment of commission? :
- (x) Approximate expenditure for producing records, summoning of witnesses etc. :
- (xi) The expected time for conclusion of the proceedings in the Court :

MEMBER-SECRETARY / SECRETARY

Dated



Front Office

Guidelines

NATIONAL LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

12/11 JAM NAGAR HOUSE, SHAHJAHAN ROAD, NEW DELHI

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Front Office Guidelines

1. Background and Rationale:-

Legal Services Authorities are providing free and competent legal services to weaker and marginalised sections of society. Front office is one of the units of the entire framework to render such services. As per Regulation 2(c) of National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010 “Front office means a room in the Legal Services Institution where legal services are made available”. Regulation 4 of the National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010 provides that all Legal Services Institutions shall have a Front Office. In the Front office are deputed Retainer Lawyer, Para Legal Volunteers (PLVs) and Panel Advocates. Moreover, persons with the qualification of Masters Degree in Social Work or Diploma or Masters Degree in psychiatric or psychology may also be called to the Front Office as and when necessary.

It is imperative to make Front Office efficient and effective so that quality and meaningful legal services are rendered to the visitors/legal aid seekers. At present, there is no uniformity in the functioning of Front Offices across the country. Moreover, in most of the Front Offices, legal services of the required standard are not delivered. It is important to strengthen Front Offices so that high-quality legal services are rendered and Front Office work as One Stop Centre for legal aid seekers/beneficiaries.

Hence, arises the need of guidelines suggesting the operational framework for rendering legal services in Front Office.

2. Legal Services through Front Office

Front Office is expected to provide legal services in an effective and expeditious manner. Functions of Front Office include:

- (i) Providing Legal advice;
- (ii) Drafting applications, petitions, replies etc.;
- (iii) Attending legal aid helpline number
- (iv) Receiving and maintaining record with regard to legal aid applications;
- (v) Uploading legal aid applications on Web Portal of NALSA;
- (vi) Maintaining up- to- date data of court based matters and maintaining data in prescribed formats.
- (vii) Updating Legal Aid Beneficiary about particulars of a Panel Lawyer marked for his matter and also updating him regularly about the status of his case.

3. Suggestive framework:

(1) Location :-

As per Regulation 4 of National Legal Services Authority (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations, 2010, all Legal Services Institutions have to set up a Front office. The location of the Front Office should be such as is visible to litigants and other people who are visiting courts or the offices of Legal Services Institutions. It should not be far away from the courts. It should not be at a place which is not visible. Front Offices should be setup at the level of State, District and Taluk level legal services institution. Sign boards spelling

out Front Office and the time of opening and closing of Front Office be put outside the Front Office.

(2) Infrastructure :-

Front office shall be well painted. It shall have at least one table, three chairs for PLVs, and one/two chairs for Panel Lawyers. It shall have at least two visitors chairs. It shall have a notice board, a computer, a scanner and printer and a legal helpline number. Suggestion box and complaint box be also kept in the Front office. In the waiting area there should be sufficient seating arrangements. Drinking water facility should be made available at the waiting area. DLSA may also subscribe newspaper and news magazines, to be kept in waiting area. LED monitor be also affixed at appropriate place in the Front office for displaying the functions of the Legal Services Authorities, entitlements to free legal services, documentaries related to Legal Services, NALSA Theme Song, Success Stories etc. the LED monitor can also be utilised for video conferencing along with necessary equipment's such as a webcam or a desktop VC facility.

(3) Duty Roasters and list of Panel Advocates and PLVs:

A daily roaster regarding the Front Office should be put on the notice board. It shall clearly spell out the names of the PLVs, Retainer/Panel Lawyers along with their telephone numbers. The duty roster of all the Front offices of SLSA/DLSAs and Taluka shall also be uploaded on the website of the State Legal Services Authorities. Front office shall also have a list of all panel

advocates and PLVs of concerned Legal Services Institution along with their addresses and telephone numbers for ready reference. A copy of list containing duty roster of all the Legal Services Clinics be also kept in the Front Office for ready reference. Following points should be kept in view while deputing PLV/Retainer/Panel lawyers etc. at the Front Office.

(a) Professionalism: - The person deputed shall have a professional appearance and attitude. The office of Secretary should take into account the said aspect while deputing a person.

(b) Technical prowess: - The person deputed should be comfortable in using phone system, copier, scanner and printer. Basic technical knowledge of using e-mail, etc. should be possessed by the candidate.

(4) Registers and booklets to be kept and maintained in the Front Office:-

Following registers/records are to be maintained in Front Office:

- (i) Front Office Register for visitors
- (ii) Legal Aid Monitoring Register
- (iii) Legal Services Helpline Register

These registers can be maintained in soft version in computers on Excel sheets or any other software deemed fit. The suggestive format is provided in the **Annexures A to C**. In the Front office, shall be kept updated data of court based matters so that legal aid beneficiaries can be apprised about the same. Feedback forms regarding the court based matters be also kept at the Front Office. A suggestive feedback proforma is attached herewith as **Annexure D**

(5) Daily reporting about case proceedings

The panel lawyer shall report at the Front Office about the proceedings conducted in the case and the next date and purpose, if the case is adjourned. This shall be reported on daily basis. The communication in this regard to the Front Office may be sent through email also. The office of DLSA shall mark the duty to a PLV in the Front Office to update the information on the record on daily basis under the supervision/guidance of Retainer Lawyers. If a panel lawyer at the end of the day fails to report about the next date of hearing and the proceedings, he be contacted to provide the same on the morning of next day. Panel Lawyers be sensitized about the importance of updating the record at the Front office on daily basis. PLV maintaining the record shall be trained in data entry. In this regard, PLVs and Retainer Lawyers deputed at the Front Office be trained and sensitized to make use of NALSA portal.

(6) Updating legal aid Beneficiaries:-

Panel Lawyers/Retainer Lawyers/PLVs be trained in updating legal aid beneficiaries regarding court based matters through SMS and Emails. System of updating legal aid beneficiary through SMSs may be adopted. Legal aid beneficiary should be updated about the decision taken on his/her legal aid application, name & phone number of legal aid counsel marked to the applicant in case legal aid is decided to be given. He be regularly updated about the progress of case. Standard format of SMS and Email be devised.

(7) **Handling legal Aid Helpline professionally:**

- (a) Legal Aid Helpline telephone should be kept in the Front Office. The PLV be trained to attend legal aid calls properly. In case of complex issues, he should refer the call to the panel lawyer/retainer lawyer instead of himself advising on legal matters. With regard to all this, suitable training be provided to PLVs and Retainer Lawyers/ Panel Lawyers who are deputed for the purpose in the Front Office.
- (b) Persons deputed for handling legal aid helpline should be courteous and have good communication skills.
- (c) In this regard, the following points must be kept in view:-
 - i. **Answering a call-** a pleasant buffer phrase such as “Good Morning” or “Thank you for calling Legal Services Authority” may be used.
 - ii. **Avoid excuses-** Callers want solution. They do not want excuses. If the person handling the legal aid helpline is not capable of advising on a particular legal problem. Then, he should refer the call to the Retainer/Panel lawyers deputed at the Front Office.

(8) **Bare Acts, compilation of welfare schemes etc :-**

In the Front Office, be kept Bare Acts of various important enactments such as Code of Civil Procedure, Code of Criminal Procedure, Indian Evidence Act etc. This is important for ready reference of the panel lawyers. A

compilation of welfare schemes of Central and State Government be also kept in the office so that visitors also can get knowledge about the existing welfare schemes.

(9) Connect with Legal Services Clinics :-

Front office shall have database of all the Legal Services Clinics including the telephone numbers of the panel advocates and PLVs deputed in the Legal Services Clinics. Any update in the matter falling within the jurisdiction of any Legal Services Clinic be given to the concerned Legal Services Clinic by Front Office so that the legal aid beneficiary escapes from the trouble of travelling to the District or Taluka Headquarters to know about the status of his/her application/case.

(10) Regular Monitoring of Front Offices

Regular monitoring be made of Front Offices at the State, District and Taluka Level. At least in a fortnight, registers be checked and interaction be done with the visitors for assessing the working of Front Office. Suggestions, complaints and the feedback forms be dealt and evaluated on regular basis. Remedial steps be taken to remedy the deficiency, if any noticed.

(11) Maintenance of Digital Record

Legal Aid applications may be received by way of post, email, web portal or applicant may deliver it in person at the office of Legal Services Authority or in Front Office. The record of all the legal aid applications be maintained at the Front Office. The applications received in hard copy form be scanned and kept in scanned form in the computer. The same be uploaded on NALSA portal . Record in soft copy form of the notices, replies, representations drafted at the front offices be also kept.

(12) Assistance of lawyer having expertise in particular branch of law -

It may happen that the notice to be drafted at the Front Office or legal advice to be rendered may be beyond the specialized field of the Retainer lawyer or panel lawyer deputed at the Front office. In such a scenario, complex legal issues requiring special knowledge of any particular branch of law be referred to the office of Secretary, DLSA which in turn shall depute the lawyers from its panel who are having special knowledge needed to draft the application/ notice or deal with the issue to render correct legal advice.

(13) Promotional Activities

Public need to be apprised about the existence of Front office and the various legal services being rendered by Front Office. Hence, adequate publicity of Front Office be got done through print and electronic media.

FRONT OFFICE REGISTERS (Annexures A)**MONTH**

S. No.	Date	Name & address of visitor	Problem	Action taken	Remarks

LEGAL AID HELPLINE REGISTER (Annexure B)

S. No.	Name & address & phone no. of caller	Date & time of call	Problem discussed	Action taken/advice given	Remarks

LEGAL AID (MONITORING) REGISTER**DATE**_____**(Annexure C)**

S. No.	Title of case	Name of Counsel	Name of Party to whom legal aid given	Previous date	Next date	purpose to which case adjourned

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Annexure 'D'

Feedback Form

(1) How would you rate the performance of the lawyer assigned to your matter?

- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

(2) How responsive was the lawyer who worked on your matter?

- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

(3) How were you treated by the members of our staff with whom you came into contact?

- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

(4) How would you rate the overall communication on the part of our lawyer/staff?

- ☐ Bad
- ☐ Average
- ☐ Good
- ☐ Excellent

(5) Other Comments.