



Victim Care & Support System

**A Project for Victim Care & Support
by
State Legal Services Authorities of Punjab,
Haryana and U.T. (Chandigarh)**



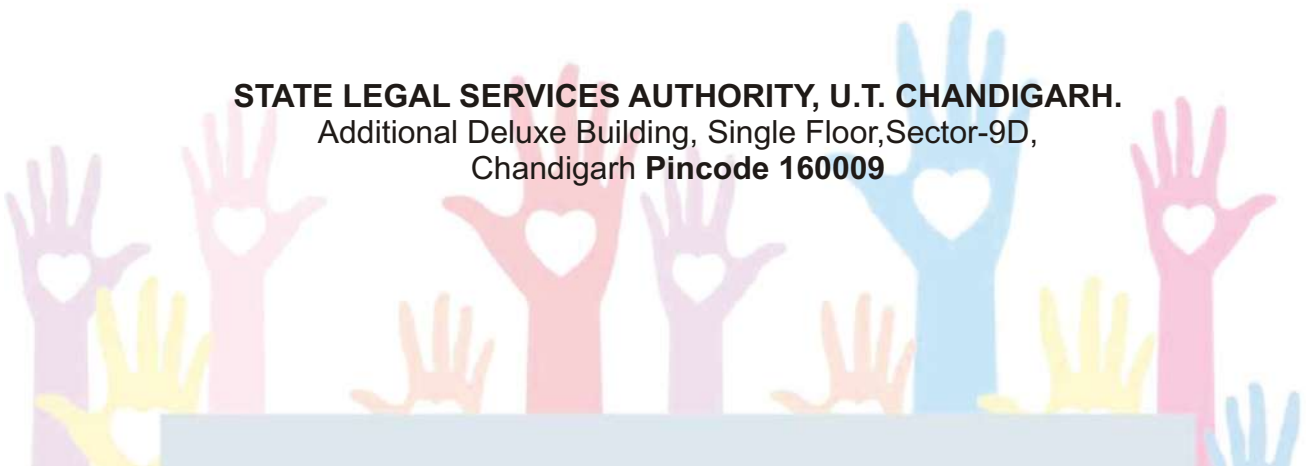
PUNJAB STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
Site No. 126, Opposite GMADA Community Centre,
Sector 69, SAS Nagar (Mohali),
Punjab Pincode 160062




HARYANA STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY
Institutional Plot No. 9 Sector 14,
Panchkula
Haryana Pincode 134109



STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, U.T. CHANDIGARH.
Additional Deluxe Building, Single Floor, Sector-9D,
Chandigarh Pincode 160009



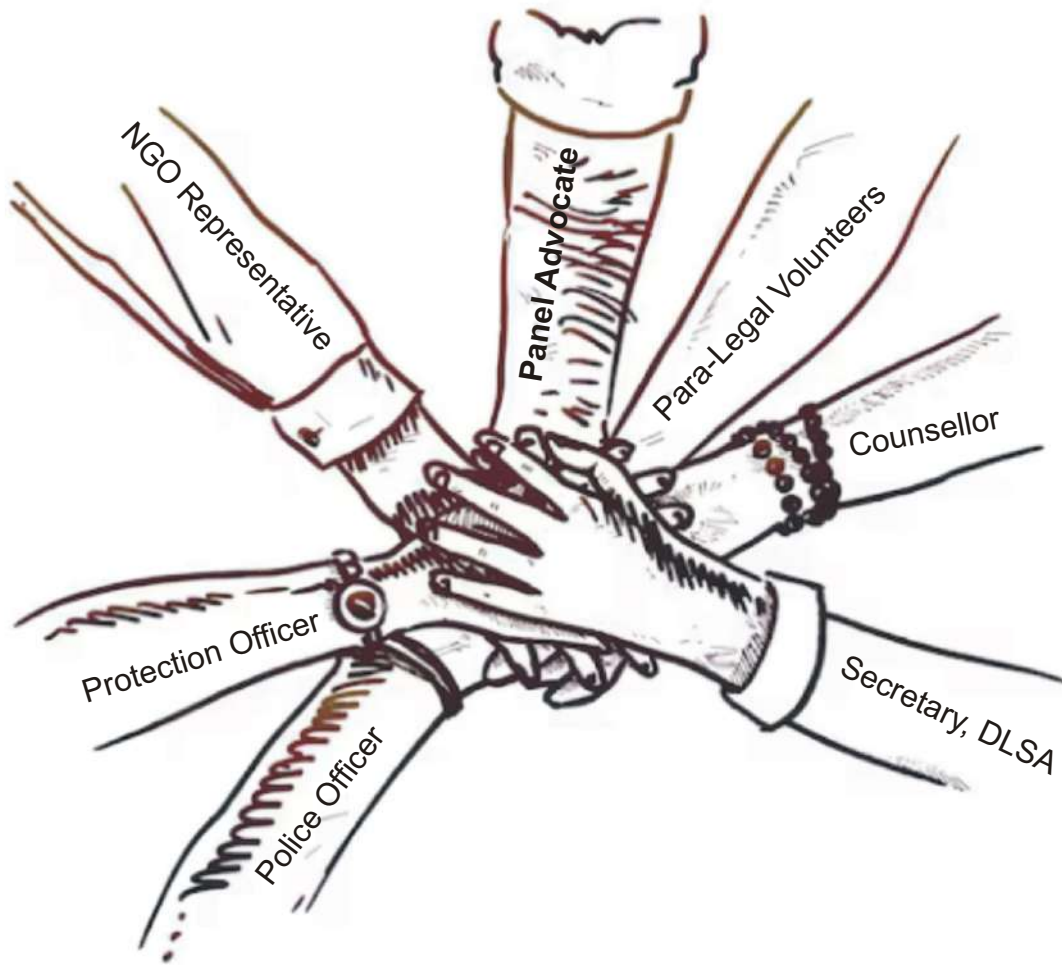


**A PROJECT FOR VICTIM CARE & SUPPORT
BY
STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITIES OF PUNJAB,
HARYANA AND U.T. (CHANDIGARH)**



In a collaborative effort, the Punjab State Legal Services Authority, Haryana State Legal Services Authority and U.T.(Chandigarh) Legal Services Authority, have launched a project by the name of Victim Care and Support System across all Districts of Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh. This project aims to provide a comprehensive and accessible system for victims of crime within these regions.





“To help victims reintegrate into their communities and restore a sense of normalcy”





INTRODUCTION

The impact of crime upon a victim is long lasting and the victim is often left with no mechanism to deal with the tragic aftermath. Apart from physical and financial loss, the victims of crime suffer from emotional losses also. Such emotional losses may be in the form of depression, low self-esteem and post-traumatic stress disorder, etc. There is a tremendous increase in crime of every category in our country in the recent past. Therefore, there is need for a victim oriented approach in the legal aid system to ameliorate the conditions of the victim of crime.

The need for a victim-centered approach is important, as it recognizes that victims require dedicated care, emotional support, and practical assistance to rebuild their lives. A legal aid system that is oriented toward the needs of the victim can play a vital role in addressing these gaps, helping to alleviate the psychological, emotional, and financial hardships that crime victims endure. Victim support programs, when integrated into the justice system, can empower individuals to reclaim their lives, reduce the likelihood of re-victimization, and foster a feeling of security and justice.

Victim Care and Assistance

The victim care aims at giving assistance and support which is holistic in nature and goes beyond the criminal justice system. The essence of victim support is improving the quality of life which was put in peril by the incident of crime. It basically serves two objectives-

- i) It resolves victims to wholeness in the aftermath of victimization.
- ii) It provides mechanisms to reduce the risk of re-victimization.



Our Mission

1. **Serve Crime Victims and Families:** To provide immediate and compassionate care to victims of crime and their families.
2. **Individualized Services:** To deliver services tailored for specific needs for each victim including crisis management, legal support, therapy, witness protection, counselling, financial support and community awareness.

Our Vision

1. **Reintegration of Victims:** To help victims reintegrate into their communities and restore a sense of normalcy, while ensuring that they know that the District Legal Aid Institution supports them during their time of distress.
2. **Prevention of Future Exploitation:** To transform victims' lives and empower them to avoid future victimization.
3. **One Stop Centre:** To act as a single point of contact for victims and their families by offering all necessary services in one location for easy access and support.

ACCESSIBILITY

- In each ADR Centre already existing at District Headquarter level, there will be a Victim Care and Support Centre wherein care and support facility will be available to the victim round the clock.
- The Victim Care and Support Centre shall be accessible to all individuals who fall under the definition of "VICTIM" as outlined in Section 2(1)(y) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023.





CONSTITUTION OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE FORCE

To ensure swift and efficient services for victims, a Victim Assistance Force will be constituted to manage and operate the Victim Care and Support System. The Victim Assistance Force will be responsible for delivering timely assistance and support to victims of crime.

COMPOSITION OF THE VICTIM ASSISTANCE FORCE:

1. **Two Panel Advocates:** Two duly sensitized and trained panel advocates including one female advocate with at least 5 years of experience in criminal cases.
2. **Two Para-Legal Volunteers:** Two dedicated and committed Para Legal Volunteers from the District Legal Services Authority including one female Para Legal Volunteer to offer selfless assistance to victims.
3. **Two Counsellors:** Two Counsellors one of whom may be from a reputed educational institution (Psychology Department) and the other may be from a hospital or the Women and Child Development Department or from the panel of Counsellors of concerned District Legal Services Authority.
4. **NGO Representatives:** One volunteer and one official from a state-accredited NGO, available during working hours.
5. **Special Police Officer:** A police officer (not below the rank of SI) to facilitate coordination with law enforcement agencies.
6. **Protection Officer:** Available as needed, either at the centre or to visit the victim.
7. **Nodal Officer:** The Secretary, District Legal Service Authority shall be the Nodal Officer to coordinate with all the stakeholders for implementation of this project.

SERVICES AVAILABLE AT THE VICTIM CARE AND SUPPORT CENTRE

Crisis Response Services: Crisis response services are short-term, intensive support for victims of major crimes and sudden tragedies. This phase helps victims navigate through various bureaucratic and emotional challenges in the aftermath of the crime. Services are customized to meet the needs of each victim. The services will include:



1. **Early Intervention:** A victim's history and current needs will be assessed by a Panel Advocate or the Para Legal Volunteer etc.
2. **Quick Response and Support Service:** The Victim Assistance Force will assist victims with accessing various services, including legal support, medical care, police coordination, witness protection and counselling.

FRONT LINE SERVICES

The system will provide an array of frontline services to victims :

1. Medical Assistance: Victims are taken to medical facilities for treatment and Para Legal Volunteers coordinate with medical professionals to ensure timely care and preparation of MLR.



2. Police Station Assistance: Victims receive help with FIR registration, obtaining police records and navigating the police system.

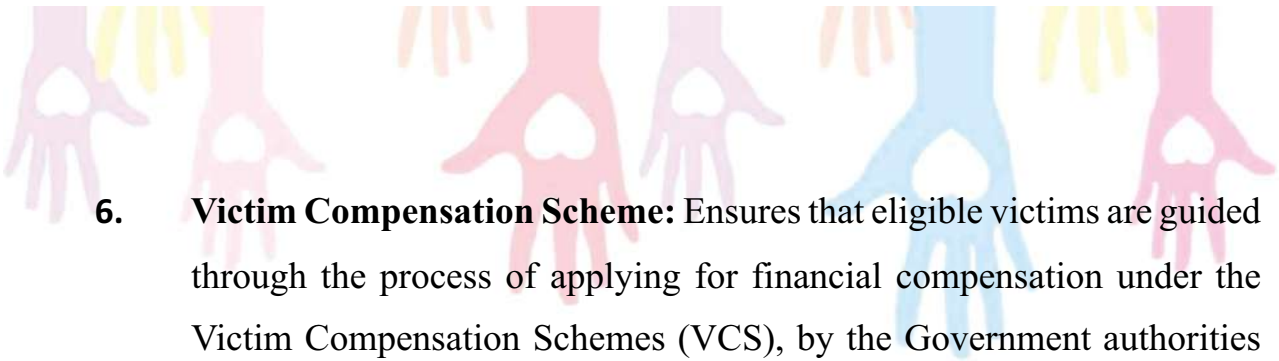


3. Legal aid and assistance: Victims will be provided with necessary guidance on their legal rights, ensuring that their voices are heard. This assistance includes help with filing claims and understanding court procedures.



4. Tie-up with Other Agencies: Victims receive assistance in dealing with insurance claims, banks and other external agencies.

5. Safety Plan: The Victim Assistance Force will inform victims about the Witness Protection Scheme if their safety is at risk.



6. Victim Compensation Scheme: Ensures that eligible victims are guided through the process of applying for financial compensation under the Victim Compensation Schemes (VCS), by the Government authorities ensuring timely disbursement.

7. Court Accompaniment: Victims are assisted with immediate legal representation and updating them about the progress of the case including dates fixed in the case, orders passed by the Court on each date.

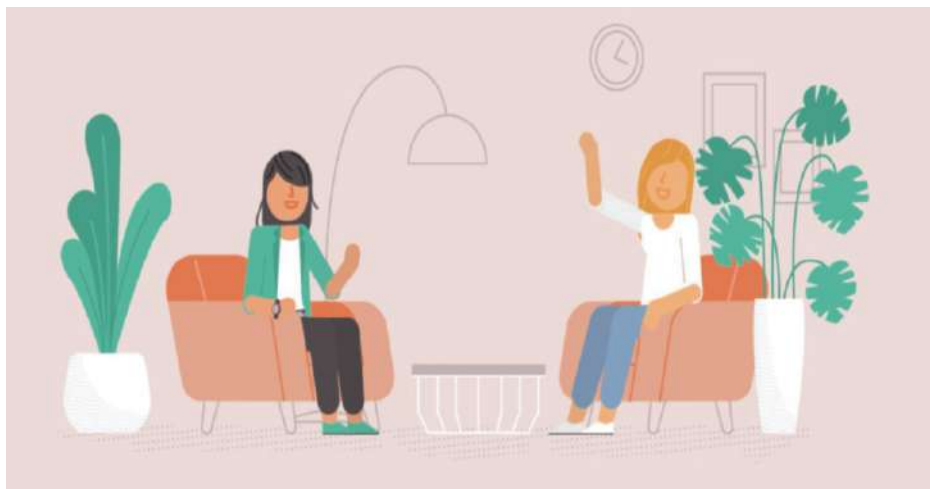


8. Rehabilitation: Necessary guidance will be provided to help the victims to rehabilitate through the appropriate Government Department/Agencies so as to ensure that victims rebuild their lives with resilience and self-confidence.





- 9. Case Management :** The Panel Advocate works with the victim to understand their case and develop a tailored action plan. This process includes guidance on navigating legal systems, accessing victim compensation and understanding the victim's rights.



- 10. Counselling :** Counselling and therapy sessions by experts so to address any psychological impacts such as anxiety and depression faced by victim with a name main aim to restore the mental, emotional and physical well-being of victim.



VICTIM COMPENSATION SCHEME, 2022

One of the critical components of the Victim Care and Support System is the Victim Compensation Scheme (VCS), 2022. This scheme aims at providing financial support to victims of crime to alleviate the physical, emotional and financial burdens they may face as a result of crime.



1. Victims who qualify under the Victim Compensation Scheme are assisted in completing all necessary paperwork and are referred to relevant authorities to ensure timely payment of compensation.
2. For victims not covered by the scheme, efforts will be made to identify alternative government schemes where they can receive support.

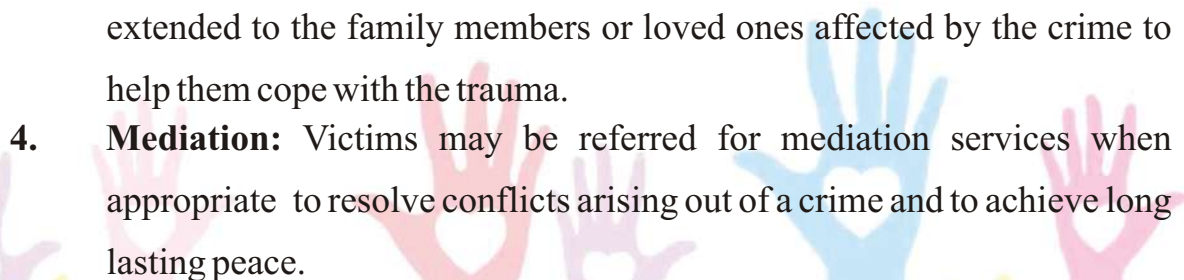


THERAPY SERVICES

Healing from trauma requires more than just legal and financial support. Therapy plays a crucial role in helping victims recover emotionally and psychologically. The Victim Care and Support Centre offers therapy for individuals, families and groups.



THERAPY SERVICES INCLUDE:

- 1. Counseling:** Sessions with psychologists, social counselors and psychiatrists to address emotional trauma.
 - 2. Specialized Care for Specific Victims:** Victims such as children, pregnant women, differently abled persons or those with HIV/AIDS receive tailored therapeutic support.
 - 3. Secondary Victim Support:** Facility of counselling may also be extended to the family members or loved ones affected by the crime to help them cope with the trauma.
 - 4. Mediation:** Victims may be referred for mediation services when appropriate to resolve conflicts arising out of a crime and to achieve long lasting peace.
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LEGAL ADVOCACY

Legal support is a cornerstone of the Victim Care and Support System. Victims will be referred to Panel Advocates for legal guidance and support. If necessary, free legal aid will be provided under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987.



1. **Panel Advocates:** Offer assistance in understanding legal processes, filing cases and representing victims in court.
2. **Free Legal Aid:** Victims who meet the eligibility criteria will receive free legal representation and assistance.

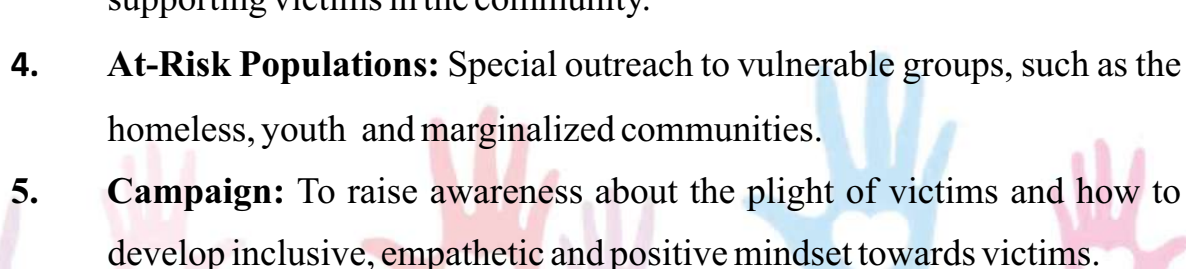


OUTREACH PROGRAMS

In addition to direct victim support, the Victim Care and Support System will run outreach programs designed to prevent victimization and promote awareness in the community.



OUTREACH PROGRAMS FOCUS ON :

1. **Bystander Intervention:** Educating the community on how to intervene safely in potentially dangerous situations.
 2. **Safety Tips:** Providing information on how to stay safe and avoid becoming a victim of crime.
 3. **Prevention of Violence:** Raising awareness about reducing violence and supporting victims in the community.
 4. **At-Risk Populations:** Special outreach to vulnerable groups, such as the homeless, youth and marginalized communities.
 5. **Campaign:** To raise awareness about the plight of victims and how to develop inclusive, empathetic and positive mindset towards victims.
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REFERRAL AGENCIES AND MODES OF REFERRAL

The Victim Care and Support System will be accessible through various referral pathways, ensuring that victims can reach out for support at any point in the recovery process.

REFERRAL SOURCES INCLUDE :



1. **Courts:** Victims who require support can be referred by Judges when a case is on going or after a victim testifies.
2. **Police Stations:** The police will refer victims to this centre for care and support after a crime has been reported.
3. **Medical Agencies:** Hospitals and medical centers will ensure that victims of crime are directed to this support centre for comprehensive assistance.
4. **NGOs:** Local NGOs will be trained to refer victims to this centre for help.
5. **Government Departments:** Awareness will be created across all government departments to ensure prompt referral to this centre.
6. **Through NALSA Helpline :** As and when a victim calls at NALSA Helpline Number 15100, the officer attending the call of the victim may guide the victim to approach Victim Care and Support Centre at the nearest District Legal Services Authority.

OPERATING PROCEDURE IN THE VICTIM CARE AND SUPPORT CENTRE

The Victim Care and Support System operates under a well-defined process to ensure that victims receive the necessary services.



STEPS FOR OPERATING THE CENTRE:

1. **Registration:** Victims entering the System will have their case registered by the Panel Advocate.
2. **Case Management:** The Panel Advocate prepares a case flow, based on the victim's specific needs and circumstances.
3. **Progress and Action:** Based on the assessment, services are provided according to the action plan. The Chief Judicial Magistrate-cum-Secretaries, District Legal Services Authorities ensures that the process follows the required procedures.



MONITORING SYSTEM

1. The Chairman, District Legal Services Authority will be the supervisory and monitoring officer of the Victim Care and Support System. With the help of Nodal Officer i.e. Secretary, District Legal Services Authority, he will ensure efficient and smooth functioning of the Victim Care and Support Centre.
2. If any Member of the Victim Assistance Force, dealing with a particular case, finds that any agency of the State Government is not performing as per their statutory mandate and fails to mend its way despite persuasion of the Member of the Victim Assistance Force, he will escalate the issue to the Nodal Officer who shall intervene and ensure the effective implementation of all the front line services of this project.
3. In case, the intervention of the Nodal Officer fails to make any impact, the Nodal Officer will bring the issue to the notice of Chairman, District Legal Services Authority who shall be the monitoring authority and the matter may be taken up with the concerned Authorities in the meeting of District Legal Services Authority.





**State Legal Services Authorities of Punjab,
Haryana and U.T. (Chandigarh)**

NALSA
National Toll Free Helpline Number
15100