4318/26

DISTRICT & SESSIONS COURT
07 MAR 2026
ERNAKULAM

KERALA STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

Tele/ Fax: 2396717, Email: kelsakerala@gmail.com, Website: kelsa.keralacourts.in
Niyama Sahaya Bhavan, High Court Compound, Ernakulam, Kochi – 682031

No.2/LADCS/2026 Date: 04.03.2026

NOTICE INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR ENGAGEMENT AS FULL TIME LEGAL AID LAWYERS IN LEGAL AID DEFENSE COUNSEL OFFICES IN THE DISTRICTS OF KERALA UNDER KeLSA

This State Legal Services Authority was established under the Legal Services Authorities Act, 1987 with the mandate to provide free and competent legal services to the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of the society to ensure that opportunities for securing justice are not denied to any citizen by reason of economic or other disabilities and to secure that the operation of the legal system promotes justice on a basis of equal opportunity to all. Kindly visit our website kelsa.keralacourts.in for full details.

Realising the need to ponder over the reforms required in the Legal Aid Movement of India a new model of Legal Services Delivery, the **'Legal Aid Defense Counsel System' (LADCS)**, in line with public defender system, was introduced by NALSA. As envisaged, LADCS involves full time engagement of lawyers with support system, dealing exclusively with legal aid work in criminal matters at every stage starting from the pre-arrest, arrest & remand stage to the conclusion of trials and appeals etc. It will enhance the availability and accessibility of Legal Aid in a timely manner and help in creating a mechanism to provide qualitative and competent legal services in a professional manner to the underprivileged and disadvantaged sections of the society.

Each Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office may have 01 Chief Legal Aid Counsel, 1 to 3 Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsels, 2 to 10 Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsels (number of positions depending upon legal aid work in the district). This system will have the effect of enhancing the responsiveness of the Legal Aid Mechanism in country and will ensure accountability on the part of the Legal Aid providers. The Legal Aid Defense Counsel System will also provide a unique opportunity for Law Students to learn from the best. The Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel will be given the liberty to engage law students as interns, to give them exposure to practical aspects of criminal law including preparation of defense strategy and doing legal research in various factual scenarios.

KeLSA under the aegis of NALSA (www.nalsa.gov.in) had implemented LADCS in the 14 Districts of Kerala. Applications are now invited for the positions specified in the schedule attached to the guidelines. The lawyers so engaged therein will not be allowed to take any other private cases or any other retainership.

The Scheme of engagement along with application form may be downloaded from the official website of KeLSA, kelsa.keralacourts.in and also from Notice board of DLSA concerned. The duly filled application form along with self- attested copies of documents may be submitted to DLSA concerned by the candidate who desires to apply, ***through speed post or in an envelope personally in the office of the Secretary, DLSA concerned*** **on or before 19.03.2026 by 05.00 PM.** Any application received after due date shall not be considered.

Note: ***Applying for engagement does not create any right/assurance whatsoever. The application of the candidate who had already appeared for the interview and found unsuitable as per the previous notification in any other district centres will not be considered. Along with the application, the applicant has to attach a declaration, as to whether he/she had already attended the interview in any of the district or not as per the previous notifications.***

KERALA STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, KOCHI-682 031
ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL

Member Secretary
Kerala State Legal Services Authority

GUIDELINES FOR ENGAGEMENT AS FULL TIME LEGAL AID LAWYERS IN LEGAL AID DEFENSE COUNSEL OFFICES IN DLSAs

1. Scope of Work:

Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office shall be dealing exclusively with legal aided matters in criminal matters of the District or HQ, wherein it is established. It shall be providing legal services from the early stages of criminal justice till appellate stage, and the same shall include visits to jails from catering to the legal needs of unrepresented inmates. Initially it shall not be dealing with all type of civil matters and cases of complainant, matters pending before Juvenile Justice Boards/CWCs, wherein present counsel assignment system (Panel Lawyers) will continue to be operational for the purpose but panels shall be resized according to work based model. The following end to end legal services shall be provided through the Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office:

- Legal Advice and Assistance to all individuals visiting the office,
- Representation/Conducting trial and appeals including all miscellaneous work in all criminal courts such as Sessions, Special and Magistrate Courts including executive courts,
- Handling Remand and Bail work,
- Providing legal assistance at pre-arrest stage as per need and also in accordance with NALSA's scheme for providing such assistance,
- Any other legal aid work related to District Courts or as assigned by the Secretary, DLSA,
- Periodic visit of Prisons of the district under the guidance of the Secretary, DLSA.

2. Selection Procedure:

After due publicity including public notice, applications will be invited and a fair, transparent and competitive selection process shall be adopted by DLSA under guidance of SLSA. Legal Aid Defense Counsels shall be engaged on contract basis in each place/district initially for a period of two years with a stipulation of extension on yearly basis on satisfactory performance. The performance of each human resource shall be assessed every six months by SLSA in consultation with DLSA concerned. The selection of Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsels, and Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsels will be purely based on merit, taking into account the knowledge, skills, practice and experience of candidates. The selection shall be carried out by Selection

Committee under the Chairmanship of the Principal District & Sessions Judge (Chairman, DLSA) as envisaged in NALSA (Free and Competent Legal Services) Regulations 2010, subject to final approval by the Executive Chairman, SLSA. In the selection committee at least three senior most judicial officers posted at HQ, dealing mainly with criminal cases, preferably sessions cases shall be included. No person with conflict of interest shall be part of selection process. After approval by the Executive Chairman, SLSA, engagement contract shall be executed between the Secretary DLSA and the person so engaged. The eligibility criteria are as follows:-

a) Qualifications for Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel:

- Practice in Criminal law for at least 10 years,
- Excellent oral and written communication skills,
- Excellent understanding of criminal law,
- Thorough understanding of ethical duties of a defense counsel,
- Ability to work effectively and efficiently with others with capability to lead,
- Must have handled at least 30 criminal trials in Sessions Courts, aforesaid condition of handling of 30 criminal cases can be relaxed in appropriate circumstances,
- Knowledge of computer system is preferable,
- Quality to lead the team with capacity to manage the office.

b) Qualifications for Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel:

- Practice in Criminal law for at least 7 years,
- Excellent understanding of criminal law,
- Excellent oral and written communication skills,
- *Skill in legal research,*
- Thorough understanding of ethical duties of defense counsel,
- Ability to work effectively and efficiently with others,
- Must have handled at least 20 criminal trials in Sessions Courts, may be relaxed in exceptional circumstances, by Hon'ble Executive Chairman, SLSA,
- IT Knowledge with proficiency in work.

c) Qualification for Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel:

- Practice in criminal law from 0 to 3 years.
- Good oral and written communication skills.
- Thorough understanding of ethical duties of defense counsel.

- Ability to work effectively and efficiently with others.
- Excellent writing and research skills.
- IT Knowledge with high proficiency in work.

Note: Qualifications may be reasonably relaxed in case of exceptional candidates or circumstances with the approval of the Executive Chairman SLSA.

3. Work Profiles :

a) Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel

- Conducting trials and appeals and bail matters in courts along with deputy chief & assistant legal Aid Defense Counsels,
- Assigning duties to deputy legal Aid Defense Counsels in the office,
- Assigning duties of Assistant legal Aid Defense Counsel for assisting him and Deputy Chief legal Aid Defense Counsel and for other work including legal research,
- Ensure proper legal research, planning effective defence strategy and thorough preparation in each and every legal aided case,
- Ensure maintenance of complete files of legal aid seekers,
- Ensure proper documentation with regard to legal aid assistance provided, ensure maintaining of up to date record of legal aided cases,
- Will be overall in-charge of administration of the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office.
- Ensure quality of legal aid,
- Consultation and ensuring updation of the case progress to the client and his/her relative(s),
- Any work/duty assigned by Legal Services Authority.

b) Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel.

- Conducting trials/ appeals/ Remand work /Bail applications/visits to prisons etc., as assigned by Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel.
- Filing and arguing appeals and bail applications in Courts.
- Maintaining complete case files.
- Doing legal research in legal aided cases and guiding assistant legal Aid Defense Counsel and law students attached with theoffice in legal research.
- Proper client interviews at various stages for quality research work and representation at remand, trial and appellate stage.

- All or any of the work of the Chief defense Counsel as per assignment,
- Any work/duty assigned by Legal Services Authority.

c) Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel.

- Filing of cases, conducting trials in Magistrate trial cases,
- Remand/bail and other miscellaneous work,
- legal research in legal aided cases,
- Visits to Prison and Legal aid Clinics as per directions,
- Providing assistance at pre-arrest stage to suspects,
- Assisting Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel and Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel in conduct of legal aid cases,
- Assisting in developing a defence strategy after sifting through all of the evidence collected by the prosecution and after hearing the accused's version of what happened during the alleged crime in question,
- Visiting location/area of alleged crime, having discussions with family members etc., for effective and meaningful input for defense strategy,
- Handling queries of legal aid seekers,
- Updating legal aid seekers about the progress of their cases,
- Assisting in maintaining complete files of legal aided cases,
- Handling legal queries relating to criminal matters on telephone,
- Any other work related to legal aid assigned by Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel,
- Any work/duty assigned by Legal Services Authority

4. Termination of Services:

Services of any legal aid defense counsel engaged in the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel can be terminated at any time without any prior notice in the following cases by the Chairman, DLSA on recommendation of the Secretary DLSA or on the directions by SLSA in writing:

i. He/she substantially breaches any duty or service required in the office, or

ii. Seeks or accepts any pecuniary gains or gratification in cash or kind from the legal aid seekers or beneficiary or his friend or relative, or

iii. Charged or Convicted for any offence by any court of law, or

iv. Indulges in any type of political activities, or
v. Found incapable of rendering professional services of the required standards, or
vi. Failure to attend training programmes without any sufficient cause, or
vii. Indulges in activities prejudicial to the working of legal aid defense counsel office, or
viii. Uses his/her position in legal aid defense counsel office to secure unwarranted privileges or advantages for him/herself or others, or
ix. Acts in breach of code of ethics, or
x. Remains absent without leave for more than two weeks, or
xi. If services are found unsatisfactory during the six- monthly performance review by the SLSA or DLSA.

5. Code of Ethics:

Personnel engaged in the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall observe the following code of ethics:

i. No personnel shall act in any matter in which he/she has a direct or indirect personal or financial interest.

ii. No personnel shall wilfully disclose or use, whether or not for the purpose of pecuniary gain, any information that he/she obtained, received or acquired during the fulfilment of his/her official duties and which is not available to members of the general public.

iii. No personnel within the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall make use of his/her office or employment for the purpose of promoting or advertising any outside activity.

iv. No personnel within the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall engage in any outside activity or act as an independent practitioner.

v. No personnel within the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall solicit, agree to accept or accept, whether directly or indirectly, any gift, favour, service, or other thing of value under circumstances from which it might be reasonably inferred that such gift, service, or other thing of value was given or offered for the purpose of influencing him/her in, or rewarding him/her for, the discharge of his/her official duties.

vi. Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall devote his/her full time to his/her duties for the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel and shall not engage in private practice of law during the term of employment.

vii. Every Personnel of the office of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall strive to preserve the public's confidence in the office's fair and impartial execution of its duties and responsibilities.

viii. Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall also follow the code of ethics prescribed by Bar Council of India for lawyers.

6. **Entitlement to Leave:**

- Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel and Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall be eligible for 15 days' leave in a calendar year on pro-rata basis.
- Assistant Counsel Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall be eligible for 12 days' leave in a calendar year on pro-rata basis.
- No remuneration for the period of absence in excess of the admissible leave will be paid to the human resource of Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office.
- Un-availed leave shall neither be carried forward to next year nor encashed.

7. **Role of State Legal Services Authority and District Legal Services Authority:**

- Office space planning, and providing infrastructure for office preferably inside or in proximity to court complex.
- Providing Office furniture, Office equipment including computers, printer, internet connectivity and other equipment.
- Purchasing office supplies on need basis.
- Engaging human resource requirement for Legal aid Counsel System Office.
- Ensuring proper functioning of Legal aid Counsel System Office.
- Ensuring effective monitoring and mentoring.
- Periodical evaluation of legal services delivered through Legal aid Counsel System Office.
- Regular trainings and refresher courses for legal aid counsel engaged in Legal aid Counsel System Office.
- Renovation of office space when necessary.
- Providing Books such as Bare Acts and Commentaries for Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office.
- Providing Legal Research Software.
- Timely payment of monthly honorarium to legal aid counsel and all staff engaged for Legal aid defense counsel office.
- Payment with regard to expert witnesses, if their services are taken.

- Payment for incidental expenses such as travelling expenses etc.
- Information/promotional campaigns/programmes with regard to Legal aid Defense counsel office.

8. **Engagement with law schools:**

Law schools often send their students to legal Services Institutions for internship. Moreover, Clinics of Law Colleges also collaborate with Legal Services Institutions. Law students can be engaged with the Legal Aid Defense Counsel office so as to give them meaningful exposure to practical aspects of criminal law including preparing a defense strategy and doing legal research in various factual scenarios. Law students maybe so engaged in the following areas in Legal Aid Defense Counsel office:-

- Legal research in criminal cases,
- Visiting scenes of crimes,
- Interviewing accused and their family members and other relevant persons,
- Visits of Prisons and Legal Aid clinics,
- Associating in campaign undertaken,
- Assist in sifting through all of the evidence collected by the prosecution and providing effective input for preparing defense strategy.

The internship to law students can be offered for a period upto 3 months. The law students so engaged shall not be paid any stipend by the Legal Services Authorities but the certificate of work and period of work will be issued jointly by the Chief Defense Counsel & Secretary, DLSA.

9. **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- The work and performance shall be closely monitored by the Secretary DLSA and a monthly review meeting will be organised under the chairmanship of the Chairman, DLSA. The Minutes of the meeting shall be sent to SLSA. A quarterly review meeting with every LADCS office and the Secretary, DLSA will also be organised by the Member Secretary, SLSA and minutes shall be sent to NALSA. On half yearly basis, review meeting shall be organised by NALSA. The formats for suchdata sharing will be shared at the time of launch. Monitoring shall be continuous process and at the end of six months the performance of every human resource shall be evaluated by the SLSA under the guidance of Hon'ble Executive Chairman, SLSA.
- Monitoring and Mentoring Committee shall monitor legal aid work of Legal Aid Defense Counsel Office.

- The Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall be involved in monitoring & mentoring of Legal Aid cases of the district.

10. Honorarium (Retainership fee):

Based on the guidelines issued by NALSA, the districts are classified as A class, B class and C class and fixed the remuneration by the Kerala State Legal Services Authority as follows:

A Class	B Class	C Class
Thiruvananthapuram	Kollam	Pathanamthitta
Ernakulam	Thrissur	Kottayam
Kozhikode	Kannur	Alappuzha
		Idukki
		Malappuram
		Palakkad
		Wayanad
		Kasaragod

For Class-A towns

	Post	Remuneration
1	Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.80,000/-
2	Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.65,000/- each
3	Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.45,000/- each

For Class-B towns

1	Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.70,000/-
2	Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.60,000/- each
3	Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.35,000/- each

For class-C towns

1	Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.60,000/-
2	Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.50000/- each
3	Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel	Rs.30000/- each

VACANCY POSITION

Sl. No.	District	Chief Legal Aid DefenseCounsel	Deputy Chief Legal Aid DefenseCounsel	Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel
1	Kollam	0	0	1
2	Pathanamthitta	0	1	0
3	Idukki-Thodupuzha	1	0	0
4	Ernakulam	0	0	1
5	Thrissur	0	1	0
6	Palakkad	0	0	3
	Total	**1**	**2**	**5**

KERALA STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY, KOCHI-682 031. न्याय सब के लिए ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR ALL

Member Secretary,

KeLSA

Note: In the recruitment to the post of Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel, qualifications stipulated above may be reasonably relaxed in case of exceptional candidates or circumstances taking into account the criminal work experience of candidates with the approval of the Hon'ble Executive Chairman, KeLSA.

APPLICATION FOR ENGAGEMENT AS FULL TIME LEGAL AID LAWYER IN LEGAL AID DEFENSE COUNSEL SYSTEM

STATE_____

DISTRICT_____

Application No. _____
(For Office use)

Photo

APPLICATION FOR CHIEF/DEPUTY/ASSISTANT LEGAL AID DEFENSE COUNSEL

1. Applicant's Name :
2. Father/Mother/Spouse'sName:
3. Date of Birth :
4. Age (as on 01-03-2026) :
5. Gender :
6. Residential Address :

7. Office Address :

8. Chamber Address (if any) :

9. Telephone no. (O) :
10. Telephone No. (R) :
11. Mobile No. :
12. Fax No. :
13. E-mail ID :
14. PAN No. :
15. AADHAR No. :
16. Educational Qualification (Please enclose self-attested copies of documents):

Course	Name of Board/ University	Year of Passing	Obtained Percentage (aggregate)
Graduation			
Professional Degree LLB			
LLM			
Any other (if any)			

17. Date of Enrolment as Lawyer:
18. Enrolment No. :
(Attach self-attested copy of enrolment certificate issued by Bar Council)

19. Experience in Bar :
(Duration of actual practice)
(Attach an experience certificate issued by the Bar Association/Council)
(a) Total no. of cases handled:
(b) Nature of cases handled :
(Attach extra sheet, if required)
(c) Specialization, if any :
(The details of a few important cases, the Applicants have dealt with/handled and reported judgement if any.)

20. Whether empanelled as Central/State Government or Government undertaking counsel/pleader :
(Indicate period& attach documents)

21. The Courts where the Applicant is regularly practising :
(Enclose Bar Association Membership Certificate)

22. Specify whether earlier remained on the panel of HCLSC/DLSA or TLSC :
(Indicate period, number of legal aid cases handled& result)
(attach documents)

23. Whether any disciplinary case/Complaint is/was against the Applicant with any Bar Council : YES NO
(If yes, specify details of both disposed & pending with documents)

24. List of the documents to be attached.
1. Self-Attested copy of Certificates in support of educational qualifications.
2. Self-Attested copy of Certificate in Enrolment issued by the Bar Council under the Advocates Act, 1961.
3. Self-Attested copy of Photo Identity Card, Address Proof.
4. Self-Attested copy of ITR for last 3 years (if available).
5. Photo copies of judgments in 5 Sessions cases, represented as Defense lawyer, (for the post of Chief/Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel).
6. Photocopies of at least 5 cross examinations in Sessions cases (for Chief/Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel).

(Signature)

DECLARATION

I hereby declare that all the statements made in this application are true, complete and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. In the event of any information being found false/incorrect at any stage, my candidature is liable to be cancelled. I have read and understood the instructions and terms of the engagement and agrees to abide by those. I declare that I fulfil the eligibility conditions for the category to which I am seeking engagement. I declare that I have never been penalised by any Bar Council in any Disciplinary Proceedings. I also undertake to maintain absolute integrity and discipline as required thereunder. I agree with the remuneration structure and all the terms and conditions notified by SLSA/DLSA concerned.

(Signature)

Place:_____

Date:_____