



MADHYA PRADESH STATE LEGAL SERVICES AUTHORITY

SOP FOR SELECTION OF LEGAL AID DEFENSE COUNSELS

It is the solemn duty of the State Legal Services Authorities to ensure that effective legal aid is provided to the eligible persons in criminal cases, in accordance with the constitutional mandate and principles of justice. To uphold the integrity and effectiveness of the legal defense system under the Legal Aid Defense Counsel Scheme, it is imperative that the process for selection and appointment of legal aid defense counsels be transparent, merit-based, and objective.

In this regard, the Madhya Pradesh State Legal Services Authority, vide Order No. 5793 dated 28.01.2023 and Order No. 1453 dated 22.06.2023, has undertaken a structured classification of districts into Categories A, B, and C. This categorization has been carried out to ensure a standardized and need-based deployment of legal aid defense counsels across the state, based on parameters such as case volume, workload, and judicial infrastructure.

Category A	Category B	Category C
Indore, Bhopal, Gwalior, Jabalpur	Burhanpur, Chhindwara, Dewas, Guna, Katni, Khandwa, Morena, Neemuch, Ratlam, Rewa, Sagar, Satna, Singrauli, Ujjain	Agarmalwa, Alirajpur, Anuppur, Ashoknagar, Balaghat, Barwani, Betul, Bhind, Chhatarpur, Damoh, Datia, Dhar, Dindori, Harda, Jhabua, Mandla, Mandleshwar, Mandsaur, Narmadapuram, Narsinghpur, Panna, Raisen, Rajgarh, Sehore, Seoni, Shahdol, Shajapur, Sheopur, Shivpuri, Sidhi, Tikamgarh, Umaria, Vidisha

Vide Order No. 5793 dated 28.01.2023 and Order No. 1453 dated 22.06.2023, the State Legal Services Authority has fixed the honorarium structure for the posts of Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, and Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel under the Legal Aid Defense Counsel Scheme. This step has been taken to ensure uniformity, transparency, and financial clarity in the engagement of defense counsels, thereby facilitating the effective implementation of legal aid services across all districts.

S. No.	Post	Minimum Qualification	Category A	Category B	Category C
1	Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	10 Years practice at Bar in Sessions Court	80,000/-	70,000/-	65,000/-
2	Deputy Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel	07 Years practice at Bar in Sessions Court	60,000/-	50,000/-	45,000/-
3	Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel	0-3 Years practice at Bar in Magistrate Court	35,000/-	30,000/-	25,000/-

As per Order Nos. 925 dated 02.07.2022, 659 dated 05.05.2023, and 1189 dated 12.06.2023, this Authority has approved the following number of posts for Chief, Deputy Chief, and Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsels:

S.No.	District	Sanctioned post of Chief LADC	Sanctioned post of Deputy Chief LADC	Sanctioned post of Assistant LADC
1	Agar malwa	1	2	2
2	Alirajpur	1	2	3
3	Anuppur	1	2	3

4	Ashoknagar	1	2	3
5	Balaghat	1	2	4
6	Barwani	1	2	6
7	Betul	1	2	3
8	Bhind	1	2	3
9	Bhopal	1	3	6
10	Burhanpur	1	2	3
11	Chhatarpur	1	2	3
12	Chhindwara	1	2	6
13	Damoh	1	2	3
14	Datia	1	2	3
15	Dewas	1	2	2
16	Dhar	1	2	3
17	Dindori	1	2	3
18	Guna	1	2	3
19	Gwalior	1	3	3
20	Harda	1	2	2
21	Indore	1	3	6
22	Jabalpur	1	3	3
23	Jhabua	1	2	2
24	Katni	1	2	3
25	Khandwa	1	2	3
26	Mandla	1	2	2
27	Mandleshwar	1	2	3
28	Mandsaur	1	2	3
29	Morena	1	2	3
30	Narmadapuram	1	2	3
31	Narsinghpur	1	2	2
32	Neemuch	1	2	3
33	Panna	1	2	3
34	Raisen	1	2	2
35	Rajgarh	1	2	3
36	Ratlam	1	2	3
37	Rewa	1	2	2
38	Sagar	1	2	2
39	Satna	1	2	2
40	Sehore	1	2	3
41	Seoni	1	2	3

42	Shahdol	1	2	2
43	Shajapur	1	2	3
44	Sheopur	1	2	3
45	Shivpuri	1	3	2
46	Sidhi	1	2	3
47	Singrauli	1	2	3
48	Tikamgarh	1	2	3
49	Ujjain	1	3	2
50	Umaria	1	2	2
51	Vidisha	1	2	3
	Total	51	108	152

The maximum number of Legal Aid Defense Counsels approved district-wise shall be reassessed by the Chairman, DLSA, for the next tenure. This reassessment will be based on the criterion that one Legal Aid Defense Counsel may handle up to a maximum of 35 cases. If the number of cases exceeds this limit, an additional post may be approved, subject to the sanctioned strength. However, the total number of Legal Aid Defense Counsel shall not exceed the maximum limit previously approved by this Authority.

In case the number of cases in a particular district is less than 35, the corresponding post of Legal Aid Defense Counsel may be reallocated to another district with a higher case load, in proportion to the need, with the prior approval of the Hon'ble Executive Chairman, MPSLSA, **in accordance with Clause 3 of the Legal Aid Defense Counsel (Modified) Scheme, 2022.**

Furthermore, during the contractual period of Legal Aid Defense Counsels, if any Deputy or Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel handles fewer than 35 cases, the workload of other Legal Aid Defense Counsels should be redistributed among all Legal Aid Defenses to ensure an equitable distribution of cases.

As per Modified Scheme of Legal Aid Defense Counsel, 2022, 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.

In furtherance of its commitment to ensure fair and effective legal representation to the accused, the Madhya Pradesh State Legal Services Authority has formulated a comprehensive Scheme for the Selection Process of Legal Aid Defense Counsels under the Legal Aid Defense Counsel System.

As part of this scheme, the concerned District Legal Services Authorities are directed to finalize the number of vacancies for LADCs in their respective districts and publish a notification in widely circulated daily newspapers of the state, inviting applications for engagement as Legal Aid Defense Counsel.

Application Procedure:

Interested candidates must submit their applications along with self-attested copies of the following documents:

1. Five (5) Contested Judgments of Conviction
2. Five (5) Contested Judgments of Acquittal (If available)
3. Five (5) Charge Order Sheets, revealing arguments on charge
4. Five (5) Witness Statements recorded during Trial
5. Minimum five (5) Memos/Vakalatnamas
6. Minimum five (5) Bail Orders

7. LL.M. Degree(if available)
8. Ph.D. in Law(if available)
9. Experience Certificate(s)related to practice on the Criminal side

Selection Criteria:

The selection of candidates shall be made on the basis of:

- Relevant experience and years of legal practice
- Quality and diversity of case handling (judgments and orders submitted)
- Professional skills and understanding of Criminal Law
- Communication Skills and Courtroom Demeanor
- Knowledge of Information Technology and Legal Software Tools
- Additional Higher Legal Qualifications (LL.M., Ph.D., etc.)

The Recruitment Committee, after verifying the documents submitted and conducting interviews, shall objectively assess each candidate on the basis of the parameters laid out in the marking criteria (**Appendix A, B & C**) and award points accordingly.

It is further clarified that all existing Legal Aid Defense Counsels shall be required to undergo the complete recruitment process each time their term is due for renewal. Their re-engagement shall not be automatic and will be subject to their participation in the fresh selection process, compliance with eligibility criteria, and evaluation based on merit, as prescribed in the scheme. This is to ensure transparency, accountability, and continued competence in the delivery of legal aid services.

The final selection shall be merit-based and aimed at ensuring the appointment of competent, committed, and skilled legal professionals for the effective delivery of legal aid services.



APPENDIX -A

Selection Criteria for Chief LADC

Total 65 Points

Practice in Criminal Law

(Maximum 15 points)

The points are awarded based on the candidate's years of experience:

- Requirement is minimum 10 years of practice in Criminal Law at the bar or above

Points Distribution:

- Minimum points (10 years): 10 points
- Additional points: 1 mark for each additional year of experience beyond 10 years, up to a maximum of 15 points (for 15 years or more of experience).

Example:

- 10 years of experience —————> 10 points
- 11 years of experience —————> 11 points
- 15 or above years of experience —————> 15 points

Conduct of Criminal Trials in Session Courts (Maximum 30 points)

Criteria for marking is subject to number of cases in which they have appeared in trial

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| i. Vakalatnama | 10 points |
| ii. Arguments on Charge | 05 points |
| iii. Cross- Examination | 05 points |
| iv. Decided Bail/other Applications | 05 points |
| v. Judgments | 05 points |

Higher Qualifications

- LLM (Master of Laws) 02 points
- PhD (Doctor of Philosophy in Law) 03 points

Interview

(Maximum 10 points)

Additional points for Previous Experience:

(Maximum 05 points)

Note: Additionally, those candidates who are currently working as Legal Aid Defense Counsels in the same district may be awarded a maximum 5 extra points for their experience and contribution, which shall be added to the final score before preparation of the merit list.

APPENDIX -B

Selection Criteria for Deputy LADC

Total 63 Points

Practice in Criminal Law

(Maximum 13 points)

The points are awarded based on the candidate's years of experience:

- Minimum 07 years of practice at the bar or above
- **Points Distribution:**
 - Minimum Points (07 years): 10 points
 - Additional Points: 1 point for each additional year of experience beyond 07 years, up to a maximum of 13 points (for 10 years or more of experience).

Example:

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|-------|-----------|
| • 07 years of experience | ————→ | 10 points |
| • 08 years of experience | ————→ | 11 points |
| • 09 or above years of experience | ————→ | 12 points |
| • 10 years above experience | ————→ | 13 points |

Conduct of Criminal Trials in Session Courts (Maximum 30 points)

Criteria for marking is subject to number of cases in which they have appeared in trial

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| i. Vakalatnama | 10 points |
| ii. Arguments on Charge | 05 points |
| iii. Cross- Examination | 05 points |
| iv. Decided Bail/other Applications | 05 points |
| v. Judgments | 05 points |

Higher Qualifications

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| • LLM (Master of Laws) | 02 points |
| • PhD (Doctor of Philosophy in Law) | 03 points |

Interview

(Maximum 10 points)

Additional points for Previous Experience:

(Maximum 05 points)

Note: Additionally, those candidates who are currently working as Legal Aid Defense Counsels in the same district may be awarded a maximum 5 extra points for their experience and contribution, which shall be added to the final score before preparation of the merit list.

APPENDIX -C

Assistant LADC Selection Criteria

Total 66 Points

Practice in Criminal Law

(Maximum 14 points)

The points are awarded based on the candidate's years of experience:

- Minimum 0-3 years of practice at the bar or above
- **Points Distribution:**
 - Minimum Points (0-3 years): 10 points
 - Additional Points: 01 point for each additional year of experience beyond 03 years, up to a maximum of 14 points for 07 years of experience.

Example:

- | | | |
|---------------------------|-------|-----------|
| • 0-3 years of experience | ————→ | 10 points |
| • 04 years of experience | ————→ | 11 points |
| • 07 years of experience | ————→ | 14 points |

Conduct of Criminal Trials in Magistrate Courts (Maximum 30 points)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| i. Vakalatnama | 10 points |
| ii. Arguments on Charge | 05 points |
| iii. Cross- Examination | 05 points |
| iv. Decided Bail/other Applications | 05 points |
| v. Judgments | 05 points |

Higher Qualifications

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| • IT Knowledge | 02 points |
| • LLM (Master of Laws) | 02 points |
| • PhD (Doctor of Philosophy in Law) | 03 points |

Interview

(Maximum 10 points)

Additional points for Previous Experience:

(Maximum 05 points)

Note: Additionally, those candidates who are currently working as Legal Aid Defense Counsels in the same district may be awarded a maximum 5 extra points for their experience and contribution, which shall be added to the final score before preparation of the merit list.