

SCHEME ON STATE CONSUMER HELP LINE (Revised)

Introduction

In line with the best practices in developed countries Department of Consumer Affairs had launched a National Consumer Helpline in March, 2005 through a mutual coordination between Department of Consumer Affairs and Delhi University which is intended to bring about the relief to consumers and help them to sort out their grievances. National Consumer Helpline presently gives service in Hindi and English only through a toll free telephone number 1800 11 4000 where a citizen can call from any part of the country and seek information, advice, or guidance for his day to day consumer problems. National Consumer Helpline is an effort in the direction of institutionalizing alternate disputes redressal mechanism and is a landmark project of the Department of Consumer Affairs.

Keeping in view the fact that Helpline has been received well by consumers, and that rural consumers would benefit more if helplines are set up in the States which cater in regional language also. Department of Consumer Affairs is of the view that such Consumer Help lines may be established at State level through the State Governments for further boosting consumer movement in the country. States will have the flexibility to associate a VCO or academic institution in the set up.

2. Scheme

State Consumer Help lines will be set up by State Govt.State . These Help lines will extendservice in the regionallanguage of the State concerned. These State Help lines will be networked with the Nodal Portal set up at IIPA under the Centre of Excellence for Consumer Protection.

3. Objective

State Consumer Helpline is proposedtobeestablished with the following objectives.

1. Development of a resource centre at State level which will be networked with national resource centre at IIPA
2. Encourage Alternate Consumer Disputes Redressal mechanism at State level and help in resolving cases through Mediation cell
3. Maximum no. of disputes resolved.
4. Early resolution of complaints.
5. Reach out to rural consumers.
6. State level machinery gets experience
7. Companies and service providers become more active in solving consumer disputes.
8. Provide service in regional language in addition to English & Hindi language.

4. Funding pattern

Grantinaidunder the scheme of StateConsumer Helpline will be considered on the basis of a an Undertaking from the State Govt. concerned to run the help line in post grant period by itself. Every State Consumer Helpline will be provided with one time non recurring grant for establishing the State Helpline. State Govt will be given Software free of cost .State Consumer Helpline will also be provided with recurring grant for five years from the date of establishing the State Consumer Helpline. After that, recurring expenditure will be borne by the concerned State Govt./UT for running

the State Consumer Helpline. Premises for establishing the helpline, electricity charges, water charges etc. will be borne by the concerned State Govt./UT from the date of establishing the State Consumer Helpline.

The non-recurring grant may be utilized for the purpose of infrastructure of the State Consumer Helpline like purchase of computers, hardware, installation of telephone lines and furniture etc. The Hardware will be decided in consultation with NIC. Software already developed by the Dept. will be given free of cost to State Govt. Recurring expenditure will include salary of the counselors to be deputed in State Consumer Helpline, payment for call charges on tollfree telephone lines, publicity etc. The grant to set up the Helpline will be sanctioned to those States who have given undertaking to run it from their own resources after three years. Funding details are given at Annexure.

5. Subjects of counseling

State Consumer Helpline will provide counseling on all products and services and will develop a database information relating to the State. State Consumer Helpline will function through a TollFree telephone number where a citizen of the State/UT can call and seek information, advice or guidance for his day to day consumer problems. It will also function as a Resource Centre with complete database of all required information necessary for counseling.

6. Medium of language

National Consumer Helpline provides counseling only in Hindi and English languages. Therefore, State Consumer Help lines are to provide services in regional language of the State in addition to English language.

7. Monitoring

Centre of Excellence for Consumer Protection will collect the monthly data and analyse them and submit a report to DCA. The Indicators like number of complaints received and resolved and time taken to resolve them and the general reception towards the helpline as a useful service will be assessed. State /UT government will monitor the progress and report the progress on a monthly basis and report to the Centre.

8. Partnership with VCO

If the State so desires it can set up the helpline in association with a reputed VCO in the State which has a good track record in the last three years. The partner VCO should be selected on the basis of a transparent criteria carefully screening their track record.

9. Staff Component

Proposed staff strength for State Consumer Helpline is as under. This is the maximum and will be as per actual requirement of State/UT.

<u>No.</u>	<u>Designation</u>	<u>No. of Posts</u>
1.	Manager	1
2.	Web Manager	1
3.	Counsellors	5
4.	Sector Incharge	5
5.	Accountant-cum-Admn. Officer	1
6.	Office Attendant	1

10. Training to the Staff

Centre of Excellence on Consumer Protection IIPA will impart necessary training to staff in consultation with State Govts.

11. Networking with National Portal at IIPA :-

There will be an effective coordination between State Helplines and the National Portal set up at IIPA. State Consumer Helpline will eventually be networked with National Portal to enable two way data access possible. For this purpose the data base will be shared by both CCS/IIPA and SCH .

The Portal will

- keep close watch of the implementation of the Scheme
- develop a centralized data base which can be accessed by the state helplines
- give appropriate technical advice to install the software and link it to National Portal.
- Coordinate in conducting training of operating staff of state helplines
- Encourage States to set up SCH
- Coordinate in the development of a complete training manual for SCH operators
- Make periodic visit to evaluate the functioning of SCH and sort out problems faced.
- Submit quarterly reports the DCA

Funding Details:-:One time Non-recurring grant

Sl. No	Item	Cost in Rs.
1	One time payment for 4 connections (BSNL Lines) @ Rs. 18,980/- per connection (Security)	75,920/-
2	Hardware as mentioned in the Annexure	8,00,000/-
4	Computer Software and Data Creation	5,00,000/-
5	Office Equipments	2,00,000/-
6	Cost of hosting the website	50,000/-
	Total	16,25,920/-

Recurring Expenditure (per year)

Sl. No.	States/UTs with number of Districts	Item	Expenditure in Rs
1	0-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected number of Calls (100) • Manpower • Training and Administrative expenses • Publicity • Yearly Rental for telephone lines. Total 	30,000/- 7,20,000/- 1,87,500/- 2,50,000/- 1,61,616/- 13,49,116
2	10-20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected number of Calls (200) • Manpower • Training and Administrative expenses • Publicity • Yearly Rental for telephone lines. Total 	60,000/- 9,60,000/- 3,12,500/- 4,37,500/- 1,61,616/- 19,31,616
3	21 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expected number of Calls (200) • Manpower • Training and Administrative expenses • Publicity • Yearly Rental for telephone lines. Total 	60,000/- 14,40,000/- 4,37,500/- 6,25,000/- 1,61,616/- 27,24,116