

OPPORTUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Women's Hostels / Student Hostel (Sakhi Niwas)

WHAT THIS INSTITUTION IS

A Women's Hostel under the Sakhi Niwas scheme (earlier "Working Women's Hostel") provides safe, affordable residential accommodation for working women, women in job-related training, and women who are single, widowed, separated, or whose family is not in the same town. Run under the Ministry of Women and Child Development as part of Mission Shakti, these hostels are operated by approved implementing agencies — NGOs, women's cooperatives, urban local bodies, or state women's corporations — on a no-profit basis. For young women migrating to a town for work or training, Sakhi Niwas is the only dedicated safe-stay infrastructure backed by central government guidelines. Income eligibility is up to Rs 50,000/month in metros and Rs 35,000/month elsewhere.

WHY THIS MATTERS TO YOU

If you are a young woman who has moved to a town for work or training and need safe, affordable accommodation, or if you know women in that situation, Sakhi Niwas hostels are designed to provide exactly that — rooms, meals, security, and even day-care for children.

GOVERNANCE

LAW / POLICY	SCOPE
Sakhi Niwas Guidelines under Mission Shakti (MWCD, revised 2022-23)	Operating framework for women's hostels — eligibility, facilities, funding
Mission Shakti Umbrella Scheme Guidelines	Overarching women's empowerment framework
SASCI Capital Grant (Ministry of Finance)	One-time construction fund for 254 new hostels with 52,991 beds nationally
State WCD department rules	State-specific implementation norms

- **Centre:** Ministry of Women and Child Development (MWCD) → Mission Shakti funding
- **State:** State Women and Child Development Department
- **District:** District WCD / Social Welfare Officer monitors the hostel
- **Institution:** Implementing agency (NGO / cooperative / ULB / state corporation) operates on no-profit basis
- **Oversight:** Hostel Management Committee (HMC) — chaired by the District Programme Officer (WCD) or District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO); members include the Resident Superintendent, two representatives (preferably senior residents), a prominent woman social worker or representative from a prominent local organisation, and any other person of social standing co-opted by the Chairperson. The HMC ordinarily meets once a fortnight, sends quarterly reports to the District Administration, and reviews admissions, fees, safety complaints, and facility maintenance.
- **Rent caps (per Sakhi Niwas guidelines):** User charges cannot exceed 15% of gross salary for a single-occupancy room, 10% for double, and 7.5% for dormitory accommodation
- **Funding:** Centrally sponsored, demand-driven; Centre and state share costs (generally 60:40; higher central share for NE/Himalayan states); residents pay user charges based on income, capped as above



KEY POSITIONS

POSITION	RESPONSIBILITY
Manager	Overall administration; must reside in the hostel per Sakhi Niwas staffing norms
Warden	Day-to-day supervision, discipline, residents' welfare
Caretakers (3)	Daily operations, cleanliness, residents' support
Security / Night Guards (3)	Round-the-clock perimeter security, visitor screening
Implementing Agency representative	NGO / agency head with operational responsibility
Hostel Management Committee (HMC)	Reviews complaints, checks facilities, advises on admissions; District Programme Officer (WCD) / DSWO chairs; meets fortnightly; reports quarterly to District Administration
District WCD / Social Welfare Officer	Monitors the hostel, approves extensions, ensures building is used as intended
Support staff	Cook, helper, housekeeping

MANDATED SERVICES

- Provide rooms for 50-100 women (single, double, or small dormitory) with bed, table, chair, and cupboard per resident
- Operate a mess and common kitchen with user charges based on salary level
- Maintain security: boundary wall or secure building, CCTV at gate and key points, security guard
- Provide common room, dining hall, kitchen, store, and sick room
- Ensure separate bathrooms and toilets with minimum fixtures per group of residents
- Provide basic disabled-friendly access (ramps) and regular water and electricity
- Where approved, operate a day-care room and play area for children of residents
- Admit women in job-related training (in addition to employed women), provided the total training period does not exceed one year and trainees do not exceed 30% of hostel capacity
- Girls up to 18 and boys up to 12 may stay with their mothers, preferably in single or double rooms rather than dormitories
- Maximum stay normally up to 3 years; income eligibility up to Rs 50,000/month (metros) or Rs 35,000/month (elsewhere)

LINKED SCHEMES

- **Sakhi Niwas (Mission Shakti)** – recurring operational funding for rent, staff, running costs, repairs, and furniture
- **SASCI Capital Grant** – one-time construction fund for new hostels (Rs 5,000 crore nationally)
- **One Stop Centre (Sakhi Centre)** – crisis support, legal aid, medical assistance for women facing violence; may refer women needing accommodation
- **Women Helpline (181)** – emergency assistance and referral pathway to hostel
- **State hostel schemes** – additional accommodation that may complement Sakhi Niwas



HOW TO LOCATE

Portal: spniwcd.wcd.gov.in/sakhi-niwas-working-women-hostel/brief – national scheme details and contact points

Also: Contact the District WCD or Social Welfare Officer; for UP check mahilakalyan.up.nic.in; for MP check mpwcdmis.gov.in

KEY FACILITIES

A functioning Sakhi Niwas should have: rooms for 50-100 women with basic furniture, a mess and kitchen, CCTV and security at the gate, separate bathrooms and toilets, a common room and sick room, regular water and electricity, and – where approved – a day-care facility for children of residents.

WHAT A FUNCTIONING SAKHI NIWAS LOOKS LIKE

- The hostel is operational with documented occupancy and maintained facilities
- The implementing agency is active and the Hostel Management Committee meets regularly
- Mandated facilities – CCTV, security, kitchen, sick room – are present and functional
- Women in job-related training (not only employed women) are being admitted
- The fee structure follows the percentage-of-salary model in the guidelines
- The hostel is known to women in the district – awareness is not itself a barrier to access

GRIEVANCE REDRESSAL

During service delivery. The first point of contact is the Warden, followed by the Manager (who must reside in the hostel). The Hostel Management Committee (HMC), chaired by the District Programme Officer (DPO) / DSWO, is the formal review forum. Complaints about rent-cap violations, security deficiencies, or facility issues are raised here first.

After service. Escalation is to the District Programme Officer / DSWO directly and then to the State Women and Child Development Department. For Sakhi Niwas-specific issues, the Mission Shakti district nodal officer has jurisdiction.

External. Ministry of Women and Child Development runs Centralised Public Grievance Redress and Monitoring System (CPGRAMS) (pgportal.gov.in) and a dedicated Mission Shakti grievance route at missionshakti.wcd.gov.in. The National Commission for Women (NCW, ncw.nic.in, helpline 7827170170) handles gender-based service denial and safety complaints. For POSH-Act violations at hostels with ≥ 10 employees, the Local Complaints Committee at the district level has jurisdiction. The Women Helpline 181 routes safety-related calls.
