



# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

## Frequently Asked Questions

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), also known as a “mother-in-law” or “granny flat,” is an additional residential dwelling unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons on the same parcel as the main dwelling unit. This includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

There are four ADU types:

- ❖ Conversion ADUs are new units that convert space in a residential building.
- ❖ Attached ADUs are new units that expand a residential building.
- ❖ Detached ADUs are new free-standing buildings located on a residential property.
- ❖ Junior ADUs (JADU) are a new type of ADU that convert up to 500 square feet of space in a single-family structure.



No matter what you call them, ADUs are an innovative, affordable, and effective way to provide new housing opportunities in existing built-out neighborhoods for the benefit of both renters and homeowners!

### *Can I have an ADU on my property?*

ADUs may be permitted on lots where there is an existing or proposed single or multi-family dwelling.

### *Can I have a JADU on my property?*

One JADU may be created on a property with an existing single-family dwelling, when the JADU is proposed entirely within the walls of the existing single-family dwelling and has an area less than 500 square feet.

### *Do ADUs and JADUs count toward residential density?*

To the extent required by California Government Code Section 65852.2, an ADU or JADU built in conformance with this section shall not count toward the allowed density for the lot upon which the unit is located.

### *What is the difference between a guest house and ADU?*

A guest house is intended to provide temporary quarters (30 days or less) within a detached residential accessory structure for use by guests of the occupants of the premises and shall not be rented or otherwise used as a separate dwelling. By definition, a guest house does not include a kitchen or cooking facilities.

### *Can my ADU be a tiny home on wheels? What about a manufactured house?*

An ADU is not a temporary dwelling unit. Trailers or recreational vehicles cannot be permitted as an ADU. A mobile home or manufactured housing unit may be permitted as an ADU only when installed on and secured to an approved permanent perimeter foundation.

### *I have an ADU on my property, can I make it bigger?*

An existing ADU may be enlarged or modified in accordance with the development standards for ADUs. Contact Planning staff to see if an addition to your ADU may be permitted.

### *Can I build a new single-family home and convert my existing residence to an ADU?*

An existing residence may be converted to an ADU in conjunction with the development of a new main dwelling unit. Occupancy of the ADU shall not be allowed prior to the issuance of a certificate of occupancy for the main dwelling unit.

### *Can I rent both my ADU and my primary dwelling?*

Owner occupancy is not required for an ADU. Owner occupancy is required for a JADU, meaning the property owner must reside in one of the dwelling units onsite.

### **Still deciding if an ADU is right for you?** Consider the following:

- ❖ You can use the space for family members or to rent out for extra income.
- ❖ An ADU cannot be used for short-term rentals.
- ❖ Renting out your ADU will likely increase your income tax.
- ❖ In most cases an ADU cannot be sold separately from the main property.
- ❖ Adding an ADU will likely increase the value of your property, which means you will pay more property tax.

### *Where do I start?*

Review the resources on the City’s ADU webpage at <https://chico.ca.us/adujadu-information>. Select a pre-approved prototype plan from the City’s ADU Catalog or hire a professional to prepare a customized ADU design. See the [ADU Homeowner’s Guide](#) for step-by-step instructions.

Still have a question? Email the Planning Division [zoning@chicoca.gov](mailto:zoning@chicoca.gov) or give us a call at (530) 879-6800 to discuss the details of your project. We are happy to help!