



GETTING STARTED: ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are known by many names: granny flats, in-law units, backyard cottages, secondary units and more. 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. These FAQs are intended to provide important information to determine if an ADU is right for you. This information is for reference only and to ensure you meet all requirements.

Q: Can I have an ADU on my property?

A: ADUs may be permitted on any property with an existing or proposed single-family or multi-family dwelling, when the proposed ADU complies with all development standards of the City's ADU Ordinance.

Q: Can I have an JADU on my property?

A: 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.

Q: Do ADUs and JADUs count toward residential density?

A: 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.

Q: What is the difference between an ADU and a Guest House?

A: A guest house is intended to provide temporary (30 days or less) quarters 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.

Q: Can my ADU be a tiny home on wheels? What about a manufactured house?

A: An ADU is not a temporary dwelling unit. As such, all dwelling units must be on a permanent perimeter foundation. Trailers or recreational vehicles cannot be permitted as an ADU. An ADU may be a manufactured home, as defined in Section 18007 of the Health and Safety Code.



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

A: 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.

Q: I have an ADU on my property, can I make it bigger?

A: An existing ADU or JADU 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.

Q: Can I rent both my ADU and my primary dwelling?

A: Owner occupancy is not required for an ADU. Owner occupancy is required for a JADU.

Q: Where do I start?

A: Review the City's ADU Development Standards and Submittal Requirements Checklist. Contact staff should you have any questions. Determine if you are going to hire a professional to prepare a customized ADU design or utilize a Permit Ready Accessory Dwelling Unit (PRADU) prototype plan provided by the City. Submit complete ADU plans and associated fees to the Building Division for plan-check review and comment.

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