

The Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Process

We are here to help you through your ADU building process. Visit the [Alameda County ADU Resource Center website](#), read our [ADU Guidebook](#), and contact the Planning Department with your questions at 510-670-5400, permitbid@acpwa.org, or in person at 399 Elmhurst Street, Suite 141, Hayward (by appointment only).



1 Think About What You Want

Visit the [ADU Resource Center](#) to view floorplans, hear about what neighbors built, and look at photos for inspiration. Consider how you might finance your ADU and if a loan is needed. You can estimate costs, fees, and rents using the [ADU Calculator](#).



2 Learn the Rules

Use the County's [Online Zoning Map](#) to learn more about your property. Contact us at 510-670-5400 to find out about any special issues. Detached ADUs more than 16 feet tall or 1,200 square feet are subject to additional review and fees.



3 Make a Sketch

Make a sketch of your property on an 8.5x11 piece of paper, including your existing home, other structures, and proposed ADU. You can use the exercise on the [ADU Resource Center](#). *Consider an ADU smaller than 750 square feet to reduce fees.*



6 Prepare Permit Application

Have your designer work with the staff to prepare your building permit application and all submittal requirements including plans, documents, and calculations.

- [ADU Submittal Requirements](#)



4 Get a Planner's Advice

Now that you have a better idea of what you want to build, contact us to make an appointment and bring your sketch in. A planner will advise you on rules, what to consider, and the Zoning Determination process.

- [ADU Handout](#)
- [ADU Rules Summary](#)

5 Design Your ADU

Although you can build an ADU as an owner builder, we recommend hiring a licensed architect or designer to design your ADU and a licensed builder to construct it, or a design and build team. Whoever you hire will help with the application process too. Use our [ADU Guidebook](#) to learn more.



9 Construct Your ADU

Before you begin, ensure funding is in place. Once underway, check-in regularly with your builders and make sure inspections are moving along. Construction times vary, but 6-12 months is common.



7 Submit Permit Application

Use the [Online Portal](#) to submit your building permit application and email in the [Address Assignment Form](#). Staff will inform you within 60 days in the Portal if any revisions are needed or if resubmittals are required.

- [Building Permit Application](#)
- [Online Portal Overview](#)



8 Get Permit Issued

Permit fees range from \$1,000 - \$10,000 and can be estimated using this [Worksheet](#). Once your application is approved and fees are paid, you can access your permit in the [Online Portal](#) and it will be valid for one year.



MOVE-IN!

Your ADU's address will be automatically assigned. You are all set!



10 Schedule and Pass Inspection

Your builder will schedule a final inspection in the Portal. After your ADU has passed, you will receive a Certificate of Occupancy and it is ready for move-in!



ALAMEDA COUNTY
ADU Resource Center

Interested in building an ADU or JADU? Here are some important things to keep in mind.

The Difference Between ADUs and JADUs

Junior ADUs (JADUs) are located within the existing footprint of a home, including an attached garage, and are no more than 500 square feet. **ADUs** can be attached, detached, or conversions, and up to 1,200 square feet. Both need to have their own entryways and kitchen areas, but JADUs can share a bathroom and/or have an efficiency kitchen. Both must be rented for 30 days or more—no short-term rentals like Airbnb are allowed. For JADUs, the owner must live on the property.



Permit, Connection, and Development Fees

ADUs can be charged a variety of fees that may increase from time-to-time. Fees may include:

- **Permit Fees:** May include building permit, plan review, and other planning fees. Download the [Fee Estimate Worksheet](#) to get a sense of the total permit fees for your project.
- **Park Dedication Fee:** \$5,775 flat fee for ADUs 750 square feet or more.
- **Address Assignment Fee:** \$140 due with application.
- **Other Agency Fees:** Other fees may be required by the Planning Department, Public Works, Environmental Health, and the Fire Department as well as your local school district.
- **Utility Connection Fees:** Contact your utilities for fees related to water, sewer, and electrical service.

Utilities and Special Circumstances

There may be additional requirements and fees depending on your location. If your property or project needs to address any of these common site issues, talk to staff early in the process.

- **Electric and Gas (PG&E):** New service can add time and cost and may be required, especially if you have non-standard electrical appliances like electric heating systems or water heaters. Learn more about the [PG&E process](#) and visit their [Building and Renovation webpage](#) for upgrades or new service.
- **Fire Safety:** If your property is in a Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) Fire Severity Zone there may be additional permits and requirements. ADUs only need fire sprinklers if they are in your primary home.
- **Hillside Sites:** More detailed drawings may be required for ADUs on a hillside. If extensive grading is needed, a grading permit may be required.
- **Septic Systems:** If you have an onsite septic system, you may need additional permits. Upgrades can add time to your project and cost between \$30,000 and \$70,000. Talk to the [Department of Environmental Health](#) early on about requirements.