



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs, JADUs and MADUs) FAQs

Did you know?

In the City of Riverside, any residential property can add at least one Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU), per State law. Properties developed with single-family homes can also add a Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) or a Moveable Accessory Dwelling Unit (MADU).

What are Accessory Dwelling Units?

There are currently three types of ADUs permitted in the City of Riverside: ADUs, JADUs and MADUs.

An **ADU**, sometimes called a Second Dwelling, Auxiliary Dwelling Unit, Granny Flat, or Mother-in-Law's Quarters, is a completely self-contained housing unit located on the same lot as another home, called the primary dwelling. ADUs have their own kitchen, bathroom, and living area. ADUs are considered *accessory* because they are typically smaller than the primary dwelling and are not considered the main use on the lot.

A **JADU** is similar to an ADU but is smaller and is usually converted from existing bedrooms or other living space in a primary dwelling. JADUs must have their own cooking facilities but unlike ADUs, JADUs may share a bathroom with the primary dwelling.

An **MADU**, sometimes called a Moveable Tiny Home, is a premanufactured independent living unit mounted on a chassis, licensed, and registered by the California DMV and is legal for movement on public highways, but not under its own power (i.e., a recreational vehicle).

Where can I build an ADU?

ADUs may be constructed on any lot developed with an existing or proposed primary dwelling. ADUs can be attached to the primary dwelling or detached in a freestanding building. ADUs are allowed in the side and rear yards but are not allowed in front yards. The second floor of the ADU, if provided, cannot be located in the side or rear yard setback.

Is there a maximum size for my ADU?

Detached ADUs may be up to 1,200 square feet of livable space. Attached ADUs may be up to either 1,200 square feet or 50% of the size of the primary dwelling, whichever is less. In any case, you are guaranteed that the ADU may be at least 850 square feet for units with one bedroom or 1,000 square feet for units with two or more bedrooms. For example, a 2,000-square-foot house may have an attached ADU of up to 1,000 square feet, or a detached ADU of up to 1,200 square feet.

Can I convert an existing structure to an ADU?

Yes, existing structures such as garages, workshops, guest quarters or portions of a primary dwelling may be converted to an ADU or JADU. Some upgrades may be required for structures that were not originally meant to be inhabited in order to meet Building Code requirements.

How much parking does an ADU require?

Any ADU will not require additional parking. If a garage or carport serving the primary dwelling is converted into an ADU or JADU, no replacement covered parking spaces for the primary dwelling are required.

Can my ADU be more than one story tall?

Yes, in most cases you may build a detached two-story ADU or construct a second story above an existing structure for a maximum height of 30 feet. Detached ADUs in the RC zone are limited to a maximum height of 20 feet.

Attached ADUs are subject to the same height and story limits set by the Zoning Code for the primary dwelling.

What are the setback requirements for an ADU?

For existing structures converted to an ADU or JADU, there are no additional setbacks. If a second story is being added to an existing structure, the setbacks must comply with the underlying zone.

New ADUs which are one story and MADUs under 16 feet in height must be setback at least 4 feet from side and rear property lines and from other buildings. ADUs over 16 feet in height must comply with the side and rear setbacks that apply to the primary dwelling. Additionally, new ADUs or MADUs must comply with the front and street side setbacks of the underlying zone.

Do I need a permit to build an ADU?

Yes, a building permit will be required. Plans will need to be prepared by a licensed design professional, such as an architect, and submitted for review to the Building & Safety Division. Plan Check and Permit Issuance fees will apply. Check with the Building & Safety Division at 951-826-5697 for more information.

Can I rent or sell my ADU?

ADUs and MADUs may be rented separately from the primary dwelling but must be for a period longer than 30 days. The property owner does not have to occupy one of the dwellings on the property to rent to other occupants.



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JADUs on the other hand, may also be rented but owner occupancy is required on at least one of the units. A deed restriction will be recorded against the property binding current and future residents to this requirement.

Any ADU cannot be sold or conveyed separately from the primary dwelling except in limited circumstances by nonprofit affordable housing organizations.

How many ADUs can I have on my property?

For ADUs within an existing or proposed primary dwelling in a Single-Family zone, you may have one ADU or MADU and one JADU.

Within Multi-Family zones, you may have no more than two new detached ADUs on a lot with existing multi-family dwellings. Additionally, existing non-habitable space (such as garages or storage areas) may be converted into multiple ADUs, up to of the existing number of multi-family dwellings on the property. For example, if an apartment complex has 20 units only 5 units may convert their garages into ADUs.

How do I connect my ADU to utilities?

ADUs may have their own separate water, electricity, gas, sewer and telecommunications connections, or may be tied into the existing services for the primary dwelling. Separate connections allow the ADU to be billed separately but cost more to install. MADUs must be connected to water, sewer and electric utilities.

Contact Riverside Public Utilities at 951-826-5489 (Electric) or 951-826-5285 (Water), or the Public Works Department at 951-826-5341 (Sewer), for more information. Gas and telecommunications questions will need to be directed to the private provider in your area. In some areas of the City, electric and/or water service is provided by other agencies.

What are the fees involved in building an ADU?

In addition to Plan Check and Permit Issuance fees, ADUs are subject to some – but not all – of the development impact and utility connection capacity fees that primary dwellings are. Total fees will depend on the specifics of your property and project. Contact the Building & Safety Division at 951-826-5800 for questions regarding fees.

Is there financial assistance to build an ADU?

The City does not offer financial assistance at this time, but the State may have grants of up to \$25,000. You can find additional information at: <https://www.calhfa.ca.gov/adu/index.htm>

Where can I build a JADU?

A JADU must be located within the exterior walls of an existing or proposed primary dwelling. Garages and other non-livable spaces that are attached to the main dwelling may be converted to a JADU. JADUs are not allowed in freestanding structures that are not the primary dwelling.

Is there a maximum size for my JADU?

JADUs may be up to 500 square feet in size and may be configured as efficiency or studio units.

What's an efficiency unit?

An efficiency unit is a small home or apartment that has at least partial kitchen facilities, such as a bar sink, counter-height refrigerator, and microwave, and has access to at least a three-quarters bathroom.

Where can I build a MADU?

A MADU must be located on the same lot developed with an existing or proposed primary dwelling and cannot be located between the primary dwelling and the street on any front or side yard.

MADUs are not permitted in any Multi-Family Residential Zone, Historic District, Neighborhood Conservation Area, or on a lot designated as a cultural resource.

Is there a maximum size for my MADU?

MADUs can have a total floor area between 150 square feet and 430 square feet as measured within the exterior faces of the exterior walls.

Are there any additional requirements for my MADU?

Yes. MADUs will need to meet specific design requirements for windows, doors, roofs, and siding to ensure consistency with the primary dwelling and must incorporate appropriate screening to ensure that the undercarriage and wheels are hidden from view. Additionally, MADUs may not have a separate street address from the primary dwelling. For more detailed information, please contact the Planner on Duty at 951-826-5800 or visit riversideca.gov/planning.

Where can I get additional information?

Please contact the One Stop Shop at 951-826-5800 or email CDDINFO@riversideca.gov.

You can also visit the One Stop Shop on the 3rd Floor of City Hall at 3900 Main Street, Riverside, CA 92522.