

The Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Process

County staff are here to help you through the ADU process. Contact the Building Department at 209-223-6422, email building@amadorgov.org, or come by in person to 810 Court Street, Jackson (M-F 8am to 4:30pm). Visit our website for all the resources and tools mentioned below at <https://www.motherlodeadu.org> and you can find our County Parcel Search Tool at <https://gisviewer.amadorgov.org/GPV/ParcelSearch.aspx>.

1 GET STARTED

- **Think about what you want** and any goals or concerns you have.
- **Look for inspiration** on our website from floorplans to neighbors who built ADUs.
- **Learn what you can build** by using the [Can I Build an ADU Tool](#).
- **Make an informal sketch of your property** and use our ADU [Exercises](#) to help.
- **Estimate costs** and possible rental income using the Amador County [ADU Calculator](#).



2 LEARN THE RULES

- **Learn about your property** including APN, lot size, service providers, and zoning by using the Amador [County Parcel Search Tool](#).
- **Learn the County rules** and what you can build by visiting our [ADU website](#).
- **Talk with County staff** early on to understand rules, deed restrictions, or septic requirements that might apply to your ADU.
- **Adjust your project budget** as needed and create a plan for financing your project.

3 DESIGN YOUR ADU

- **Consider using the [ADU Plans Gallery](#)** to start from an existing plan, saving time and money.
- **Hire your team** including a licensed designer and contractor (or design/build team). They will help with the application process too.
- **Create your initial design** and discuss it with Building Department staff.
- **Finalize your design** and plans for permitting.

4 APPLY FOR PERMITS

- **Prepare your application and review our [ADU Checklist](#)** to ensure your submission is complete.
- **Submit your application** on the [Amador County Portal](#) or in person and pay fees. Review in 2-4 weeks.
- **Revise your application** if requested (at least one round of is typical). Check your permit status using the Portal. All fees are due upon approval.
 - [Submittal Requirements Worksheet](#)
 - [Fee Estimates Handout](#)

5 CONSTRUCT YOUR ADU

- **Ensure all funding is established** before beginning construction.
- **Monitor construction** (typically 6-12 months) by checking in with contractors and ensuring inspections are moving along.
- **Schedule and pass all inspections** (usually done by contractor) during construction by calling 209-223-6422.

6 MOVE-IN!

Once your ADU has passed final inspection, you'll receive your Certificate of Occupancy and it's ready for move-in!



MOTHER LODE ADU

Interested in an ADU or JADU?

Here are some important things to keep in mind.



The Difference Between ADUs and JADU

ADUs are a second home on your property with their own kitchen and bathroom. They range from small studios to 2+ bedrooms and may be detached, attached, or a conversion.

Junior ADUs (JADUs) are within the footprint of your home (or attached garage) and less than 500 square feet. They can share a bathroom and/or have an efficiency kitchen. Owner must live on site.

Both need to have their own entrance and must be rented for 30 days or more—no short-term rentals like Airbnb are allowed. RVs, tiny homes on wheels, yurts, and storage structures are NOT considered ADUs. Please contact the Building Department if you have questions about alternative build designs.

Special Circumstances and Utilities [SEE DETAILS IN OUR ADU GUIDEBOOK](#)

There may be additional requirements and fees depending on your property. Talk to staff early to find out.

- **Fire Safety:** Most mortgage lenders require fire insurance and there may be additional rules and fire impact fees based on your location. Plus, if your main home requires fire sprinklers, so will the ADU. Call AFPD at 209-223-6391 for a fees estimate and see our guidebook for resources on wildfire preparedness and fire hazard zones.
- **Sewer and Water:** If connecting to a public utility, you will need to receive clearance before submitting your application. County staff will direct you to the appropriate company.
- **Onsite Septic Systems:** Systems usually require greater capacity. Contact Environmental Health at 209-223-6439 or ACEH@amadorgov.org to learn about your capacity. The cost to upgrade ranges from \$5,000-\$40,000, excluding permits.
- **Owner Builder Requirements:** You will also need to submit a [Special Declaration Form](#) if you are a property owner building your ADU.
- **Snow Load, Windspeed, Seismic and Other Requirements** often need to be considered when building an ADU. Talk with staff to find out what requirements apply to your property and project.
- **Bring an Existing ADU up to Code:** If you constructed an ADU without a building permit, you may want to consider bringing it up to code. Doing so can reduce liability and risks to occupants, increase property value and provide peace of mind. Talk to staff to learn more.



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