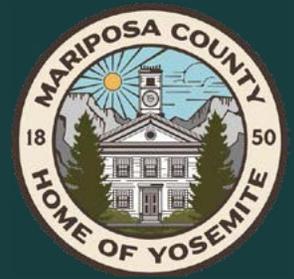


MARIPOSA COUNTY

ADU Guidebook



motherlodeadu.org

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUILDING AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT



GETTING
STARTED



LEARNING
THE RULES



BUDGETING



DESIGN



PERMITTING



CONSTRUCTION



MOVE-IN



WELCOME TO MOTHER LODE ADU

Mariposa County



This guide was created as a resource to help residents of Mariposa County through the entire process of building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU)—also known as granny flats, backyard cottages, in-law units, or basement/garage apartments.

These pages include a step-by-step approach to your ADU project (from ADU 101 all the way to move-in) and provide links to helpful resources and tools along the way.

Mother Lode ADU Online

Our [ADU website](#) includes this Guidebook and the exercise worksheets that go along with it, plus a variety of other tools and resources to guide you through the ADU process. This includes an ADU Plans Gallery where you can compare and select pre-existing plans, saving both time and money.

GUIDEBOOK & EXERCISES

motherlodeadu.org/guidebook

COUNTY ADU RULES motherlodeadu.org/rules

ADU CALCULATOR motherlodeadu.org/calculator

PLANS GALLERY motherlodeadu.org/plans

ADU GLOSSARY motherlodeadu.org/glossary

CAN I BUILD TOOL motherlodeadu.org/can-i-build
and much more!

Mariposa County Planning Department

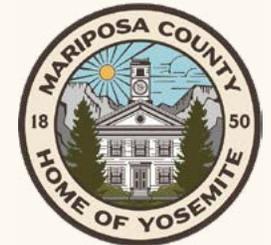
5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa

Mon-Fri 8:00am – 5:00pm

[Website](#)

209-966-5151

planningdept@mariposacounty.org



MORE CONTACT INFO IN THE DIRECTORY, FINAL PAGES

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COVER PHOTO: RICHARD ADU STORY, PAGE 48;
TOP LEFT PHOTO: GAIL ADU STORY, PAGE 14

[SEE ALL URLS](#) in the Directory (final pages).

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This guidebook includes exercises to help you plan your ADU project. See the final pages of this Guidebook or download a separate PDF using the QR code.



GETTING STARTED

- Identifying Goals & Concerns
- Recording Your ADU Goals
- Making a Rough Property Sketch

LEARNING THE RULES

- Property Details Worksheet
- Staff Meeting Worksheet

BUDGETING & FINANCE

- Budgeting Exercise

DESIGN

- Initial Design Exercise
- Design Ideas Exercise
- Designer Considerations Exercise

PERMITTING

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MOVE-IN

- What You Want in a Lease



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ADU STORIES



GAIL
Stability for Local Workers



RICHARD
Flexible Housing for Family



48 SUE
A Perfect Place for Mom



ROSEMARY
Confidence from Extra Income



ADU 101

ADUs (Accessory Dwelling Units) come in many shapes and sizes but are always a self-contained home that is usually smaller than the main home and legally part of the same property.

They must have a kitchen, bathroom, and place to sleep, and can range from 190 square foot studios to 1,200 square foot homes with multiple bedrooms, depending on your property size and location.



Another Option: JADUs

JUNIOR ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS (JADUS) are a smaller type of ADU up to 500 square feet within a home that have their own entryway. They can also have an entry way into the main house. Unlike ADUs, they have the option to share a bathroom with the main home (if it's accessible from the JADU) and include just an efficiency kitchen (sink, cabinets, smaller appliances, and counter). Another big difference is the owner must live in either the main home or the JADU, even if the property has an ADU too. Construction costs for JADUs are typically much lower.

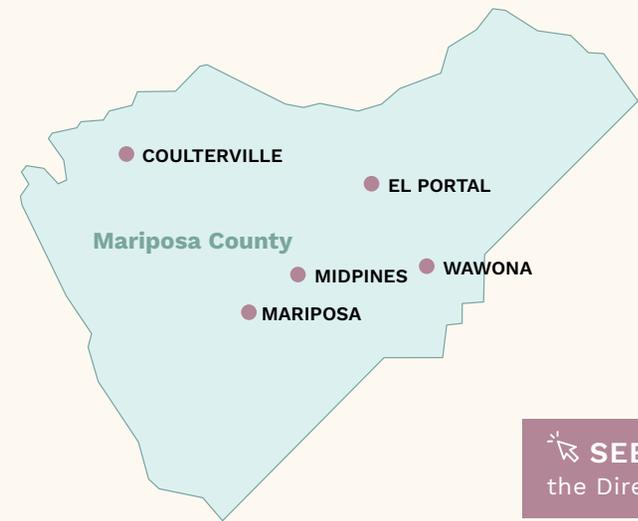
State law now allows homeowners to have both a JADU and a regular ADU on their property.



DOES THIS GUIDE APPLY TO YOUR ADU?

Please note, this guide was written to help everyone in Mariposa County build an ADU, including areas like Coulterville, El Portal, and Midpines. Since every place is unique, there may be specific requirements for your project depending on where you plan to build.

Please use the [Can I Build tool](#) to verify your location and what rules apply.



SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).

Types of ADUs

ADUs do not always fit neatly into one category – like an attached ADU made from converted space, for instance. See more about types in the Learn the Rules section.



DETACHED New freestanding structure separate from the main home, like a backyard cottage



ATTACHED New structure (may include some converted space) sharing at least one wall with the main home



CONVERSION Converted existing space in the main home or on the property (bedroom, basement, detached garage)



JADU A type of conversion up to 500 square feet within the main home (existing or proposed)



MULTI-FAMILY Any of the above (except JADU) that is part of a multifamily building like a duplex, triplex, or apartment building (existing or proposed)

WHAT IS NOT AN ADU



RVs, tiny homes on wheels, yurts, and storage structures are usually not considered ADUs, because it is hard for them to meet California Building Code.

Construction Methods



SITE-BUILT/TRADITIONAL means an ADU built from scratch on your property.



PREFAB/PANELIZED/MODULAR means an ADU is built off site, delivered to your property, and assembled or placed on a foundation.

See more about site-built vs. prefabricated ADUs in the Design section.

Benefits of ADUs

Building and renting an ADU is truly a community service — ADUs often provide homes for the local workforce, seniors, and young families who have difficulty finding local housing that meets their needs.

For homeowners, there are many reasons to build an ADU — keeping multiple generations of family together on the same property, financial security, flexibility over time, safe and convenient housing for friends or local workers, and many others.



A HOME AS YOU AGE for a caregiver or for aging adults who want to rent their main home and live in their ADU.



RENTAL INCOME for retirement, savings, or a rainy day from either the ADU or the main home.



HOUSING FRIENDS AND FAMILY like adult children, aging grandparents or parents, or loved ones with special needs.



SAFETY with an extra set of eyes and hands on the property day-to-day or when you're away.



PROPERTY VALUE improves with a new ADU, increasing the future sale price.



LOCAL SUPPORT is built through small-scale living and rentals for workers, supporting our local environment and businesses (and reducing commutes).

The ADU Process

? How long does it take?

Project Timing

Building an ADU is an investment of time as well as money. Most projects take one to two years to complete, with interior conversions being the fastest.

Stages of the process include:

- **PLANNING** 1-3 months
Getting Started, Learning the Rules, Budgeting
- **DESIGN** 1-6 months
- **PERMITTING** 1-6 months
- **CONSTRUCTION** 6-12 months

ADU PROCESS AT-A-GLANCE



The following is a general overview of all you can expect as you build your ADU. Many homeowners find that their project does not follow a straight line, so don't be surprised if steps happen in a different order. That is normal!

Visit [our ADU website](#) for tools and resources associated with each step of the process.

SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).

Project Timeline



PLANNING

1-3 mos.



DESIGN

1-6 mos.



PERMITTING

1-6 mos.



CONSTRUCTION

6-12 mos.



ADU Process At-A-Glance

County staff are available to help you through the ADU building process. Please contact the Planning Department with your questions and visit our [ADU website](#) for more information. See the Directory (final pages) for contact information.

1 GET STARTED

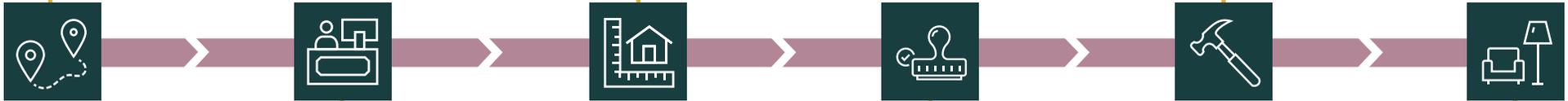
- **Think about what you want** and **look for inspiration** on our [ADU website](#) – explore floorplans and ADU stories.
- **Learn what you can build** by using the [Can I Build an ADU Tool](#).
- **Make an informal sketch** of your property using our [ADU exercises](#).
- **Estimate costs and rental income** using the [Mariposa ADU Calculator](#).

3 DESIGN YOUR ADU

- **Consider using the [ADU Plans Gallery](#)** to start from an existing plan.
- **Hire your team** of 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 Planning Department staff.
- **Finalize your design** and plans for permitting.

5 CONSTRUCT YOUR ADU

- **Ensure all funding is established** before beginning construction.
- **Monitor construction** (typically 6-12 months) by checking in with contractors, making decisions about materials, and ensuring inspections are moving along.
- **Schedule and pass all inspections** (usually done by your contractor) throughout construction by calling the Building Department at 209-966-3934.



2 LEARN THE RULES

- **Learn about your property**, including APN, lot size, service providers, and zoning with the [County Property Search Tool](#).
- **Learn the County rules** and what you can build on our [ADU website](#).
- **Talk with County staff** about rules, deed restrictions, and septic and water issues.
- **Adjust your project budget** as needed and create a plan for financing your project.

4 APPLY FOR PERMITS

- **Prepare your [building permit application](#)** and review our [ADU Checklist](#) to ensure your submission is complete.
- **Submit your application** in person or online to the Building Department and pay permit fees. Reviewed in two weeks.
- **Revise your application** if requested (at least one round is typical) and resubmit. All fees are due before you collect your permit.

6 MOVE IN! Once your ADU has passed final inspection, it's ready for move-in!



SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).



SECTION ONE

Getting Started



Think About What You Want



Make a Sketch



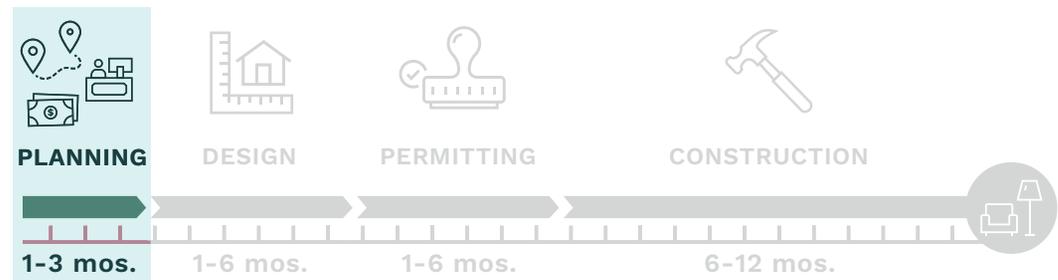
Estimate Costs

PLUS:

- Early Considerations

Project Timeline

Getting Started is part of the planning phase, which typically takes 1-3 months. Most ADU projects take 12-18 months to complete, but some extend to 24 months or more.





Think About What You Want

? How do I get started?

Keep in mind that your ideas are likely to change after you learn more about your property and when you hire a professional team. Being flexible is key!

Typically, a studio is 190–400 square feet, a one-bedroom is 400–850 square feet, and a two-bedroom is 700–1,200 square feet.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

Goals and Concerns

Start by thinking about both your short- and long-term goals. One of the benefits of an ADU is that how you use it can change with your needs over time. At first, you might rent it, then turn it into a children's playroom, and eventually it might house aging parents or yourself.

It is also important to think about your concerns, like cost, financing, and design. Ways to address these potential challenges are explored in this guide. Creating a list early in the process can help make sure they are addressed sufficiently.

Look For Inspiration

Learning about other ADUs helps you visualize how you might use one, decide what features and design elements matter to you, and get a feel for smaller living spaces.

ADU SPOTLIGHTS Read stories in this Guidebook or [on our website](#)  about neighbors who have built or live in ADUs.

FLOORPLANS See a large selection of real-world ADU floorplans from across California [on our website](#) .



EXERCISES

IDENTIFYING GOALS & CONCERNS

Short- and long-term goals and concerns for your ADU.

RECORDING YOUR ADU GOALS

Focusing on the benefits of your ADU.

SEE FINAL PAGES
OR USE QR CODE



MOTHER LODE ADU PLANS GALLERY

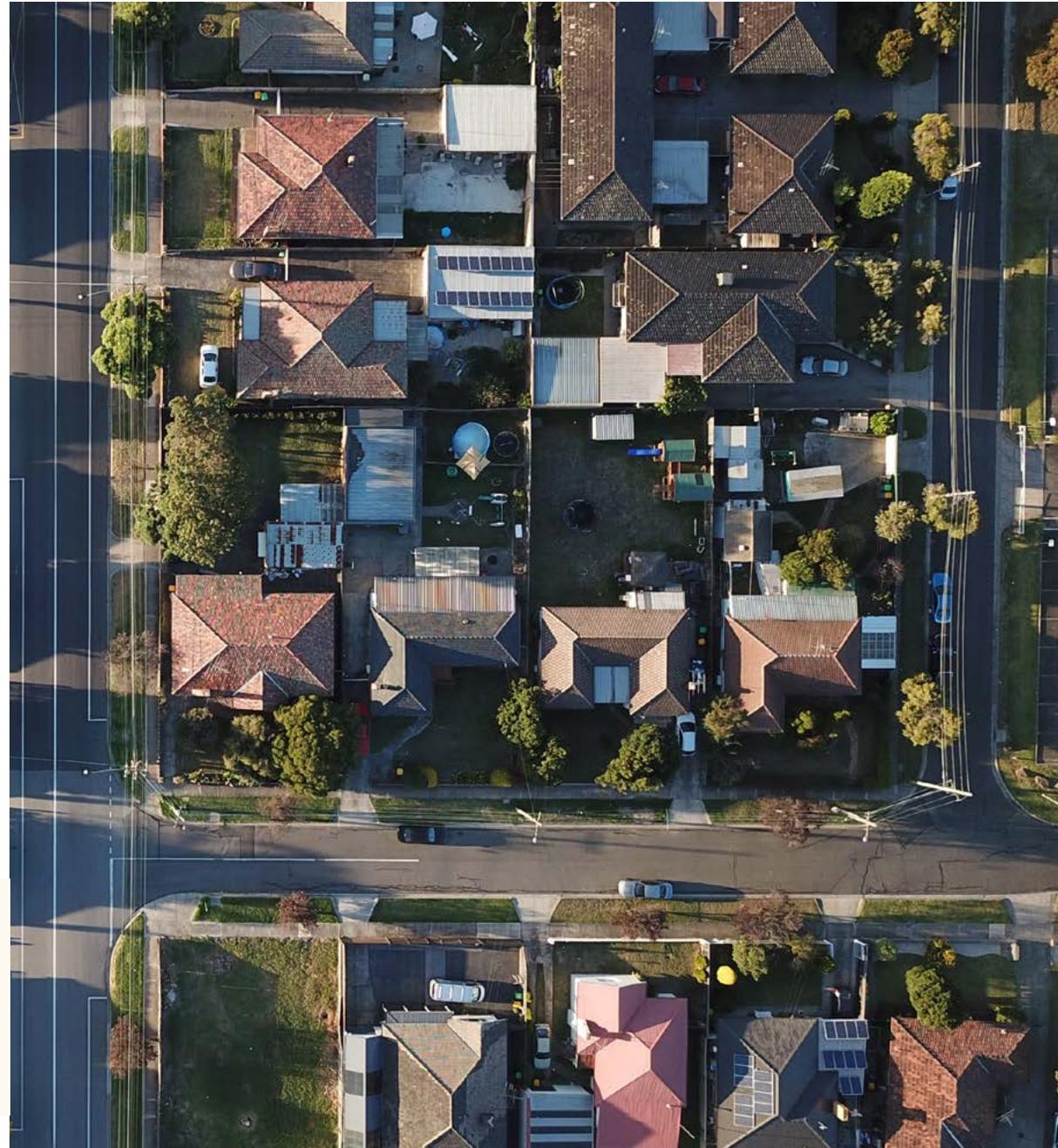
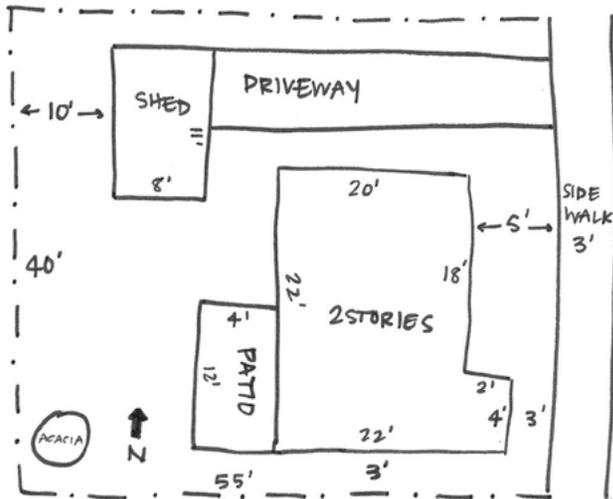
Jump start your design by visiting our [Plans Gallery](#)  to view and compare dozens of pre-existing designs and connect directly with the designer. Choosing one of these plans can save you time money.

TALK TO FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS If you know people who have built ADUs, talk to them about what they like and what they wish they'd done differently. If you know any architects or contractors, chat with them about ADUs and the process.



Make an Informal Sketch

This is a good time to make an informal, rough sketch of your property, including existing structures, trees, driveways, and other major elements like creeks, ponds or slopes over 30%. You can continue to update/revisit this sketch as you learn more about your property and development rules. Use our Property Sketch exercise for instructions and tips.



EXERCISES

MAKING A ROUGH SKETCH OF YOUR PROPERTY

Guidelines for drawing a rough site map of your property.

SEE FINAL PAGES
OR USE QR CODE





Estimate Costs

A very rough placeholder for you to use is \$200-\$350 per square foot, including construction (“hard costs”) and other costs like design and permit fees (“soft costs”). The real number can vary widely and depends on many factors such as quality of finishes, septic system improvements or site preparation work.

The [Mariposa County ADU Calculator](#) is a great place to start when developing a budget. It provides a rough estimate of costs, fees, and rents and will help you understand how choices can impact your budget over time.

We talk more about costs in the Design, Permitting, and Construction sections. See the Budgeting & Finance section for a detailed explanation of financing options.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

PHOTO: ROSEMARY ADU STORY, PAGE 70



Early Considerations

Things to think about early on to avoid problems down the road:

SPEAKING TO NEIGHBORS You're not required to tell your neighbors about your ADU, but it is always a good idea to talk with them early in the process about changes to your property. Who knows – learning about the process through your experience may help them decide to build an ADU too!

SHARING SPACE Think about what it will be like to be a landlord or to share your property with someone. The tenant may share a backyard or wall and utilities. You may want to consider soundproofing, ventilation for cooking smells, utility costs, and any shared maintenance tasks.

FIRE SAFETY Most mortgage lenders require fire insurance and there may be additional rules depending on the location of your property. If the main home has fire sprinklers, the ADU will require sprinklers as well.

ZONE OR AREA RULES If your property is in a special zone or area, like a Town Planning Area, Historic District, High Fire Hazard Severity Zones, or Yosemite National Park, you may need to consider additional guidance and rules. It's important to understand these rules early on – talk with County staff and see the Learning the Rules section for more detail.

SPECIAL PROPERTY RULES County staff will let you know about any requirements for your property, like snow load (depends on elevation) and hillsides (depends on slope). High-engineered designs may be required.

UTILITIES You'll need to figure out what's required for your ADU's utility services (water, sewer, gas, electricity). Some ADUs will require new connections or you may need to upgrade services, septic systems, and/or meters, which can possibly add sizable time and cost to your project. See the Learning the Rules section for more details on Utilities.





ADU STORY

Gail STABILITY FOR LOCAL WORKERS

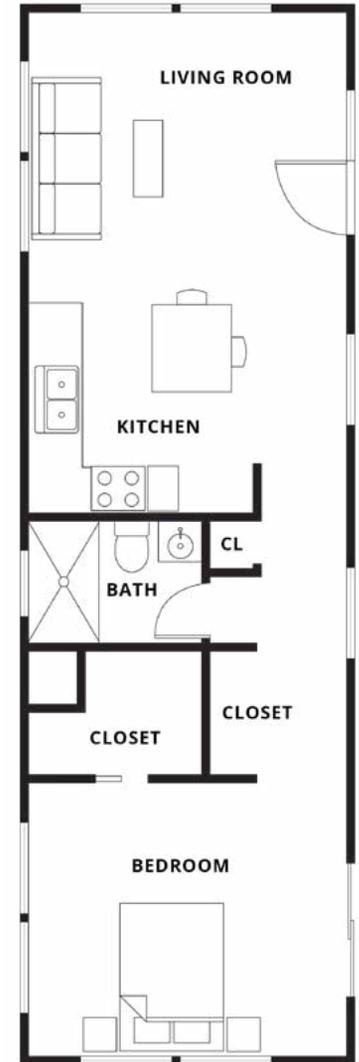


“ I’m grateful for the ADU, it’s been a safe home for so many people who are important to me, from my mother to my daughter, it’s given stability to my whole family.

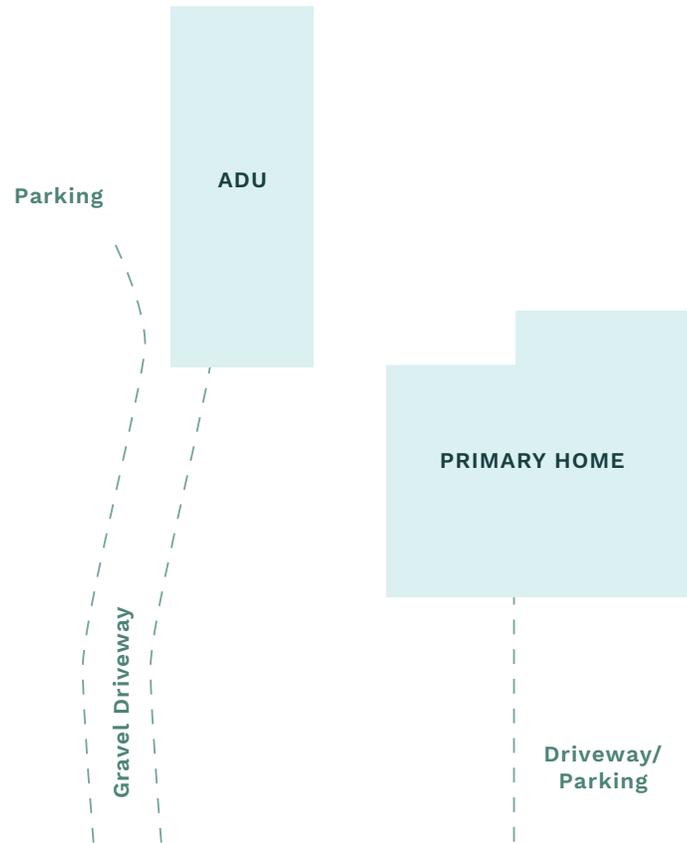
I raised my children in El Portal where I worked as a teacher, before moving to Mariposa where I still teach, and lead the Yosemite Songwriting Retreat. I bought a house that had space for an ADU and I wanted my mother to move here so I could take care of her as she aged. My mom and I were very close and I wanted this space to be special for her. We decided to get a prefabricated unit, an ADU that just needed to be delivered and installed. We went to the factory to see the house before we bought it. The prefab company measured the property to make sure there was enough space. Once the location was approved, the ADU was transported and installed. We were lucky to find a ready-made option that came with everything including appliances, furniture, and decor.

There were still a lot of things to set up like water, sewer, electricity and internet. There was an old shed on the ADU site, so we had to remove that, take out trees, build a retaining wall, and add a driveway. I had no building experience at the time, so I got a lot of help from the Mariposa Planning Department. Without professional help, the process felt overwhelming at times. There were several different agencies with whom I had to work. It took a lot of time, but it was worth it to build a comfortable home for my mom. It was something special we got to share and make our own. We even wrote our initials in the driveway pavement.

After my mother passed away, the ADU became a flexible rental space. During the pandemic my daughter lived there. Now I use it as a rental. Local nurses and National Park employees have lived there. At the moment, I’m renting it to a family friend who works in the local music industry. If she moves out, I won’t have any trouble finding a new tenant. There’s a great need for rental housing in Mariposa. I’m grateful for the ADU. It’s been a safe home for so many people who are important to me. It’s given stability to my family and friends.



LOCATION	Mariposa
TYPE/LAYOUT	Detached, studio
PRICE	\$125,000
COMPLETED	2015
TIME	12 months
SIZE	630 square feet





ADU INSIDER PERSPECTIVE

Five Tips from a Realtor



Russell Robinson Real Estate Professional



I'm a local real estate professional and recently legalized an unpermitted ADU on my property. The structure was built by previous owners and I couldn't find documentation, so I worked with Amador County staff to bring it up to code. Luckily the work was minimal, including weatherizing the entrance, reroofing, and reorganizing the layout. My investment of less than \$15,000 gave me peace of mind from legal or safety issues, along with improved property value. In my experience, the County was really on the homeowner's side, so I encourage others to explore legalizing or building an ADU. I couldn't think of a better way to invest in my property and my community.

- 1 HAVING AN ADU IS ALWAYS A BENEFIT** ADUs are attractive to all buyers, from retirees looking for extra income to families considering multi-generational living. The housing market is exceptionally tight and the local workforce feels the most squeeze, so ADUs are a win/win.
- 2 LAWS AND INCENTIVES SUPPORT BUILDING ADUS** State and local governments see ADUs as a tool in solving our housing crisis, so there are protections and systems in place to get units permitted and built.
- 3 EXISTING STRUCTURES CAN BE TURNED INTO ADUS** If you're in the market to buy a home, keep eyes out for garages, barns, or other structures that could be converted. It's important to do your research, but unpermitted structures are not necessarily a red flag. Converting or permitting a building can be quicker and less expensive than new construction.
- 4 LOCAL STAFF ARE HERE TO HELP** Staff are committed to improving housing availability and they want to see your ADU get permits unless there is a clear safety or environmental danger. Recent laws also strengthened protections for homeowners, so local staff won't flag code violations unrelated to the ADU.
- 5 PREFAB IS A GREAT OPTION** The quality of construction has improved dramatically, and prefab can save a lot of time and headaches that often come with construction. Prefab companies work across the region and offer a variety of options that can be customized to your needs.



SECTION TWO

Learning the Rules



Learn About Your Property



Meet With Staff



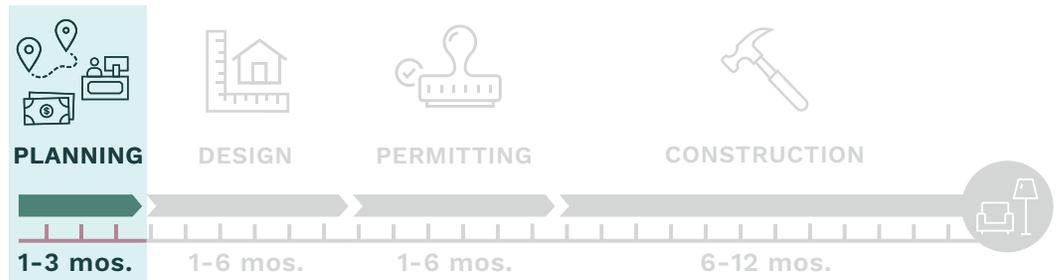
Learn What You Can Build



Adjust Project Budget

Project Timeline

Learning the Rules is part of the planning phase, which typically takes 1-3 months. Most ADU projects take 12-18 months to complete, but some extend to 24 months or more.





Learn About Your Property

Confirm what you learn about your property with local Planning staff before beginning design, especially if you get information from informal sources like real estate websites. It may feel scary to reach out but remember that County staff are here to help you. The County will not inspect your property or look for code violations if you ask about building an ADU.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

An important first step when building an ADU is to gather information about your property. You can start by reviewing the [County ADU Rules](#)  and reading through this section to familiarize yourself with the concepts.

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBER (APN) Every site or lot in California is assigned a unique APN, which is like a social security number for your property ("XXX-XXX-XXX"). Your APN will be listed on your property tax bill and can also be found by using the [Mariposa County Property Search Tool](#) . Start by following the "Property Search Tool" link, then type your house number and street name in the search bars and select the address from the drop-down menu, then click the green "Search" button. Your APN will be the first item listed under "General Information".

LOT SIZE At many points in the process, you'll need to know the total acreage or square footage of your property. Here are some ways to find that number:

- **Mariposa County Property Search Tool** After following the same process used to search for your APN, see the section titled "Property Characteristics". Your lot size will be listed in both acres and square feet.
- [Can I Build Tool](#)  Type your address in the search bar and select your address from the drop-down menu.
- **County records** You can also ask for your property characteristics from the County Assessor/Recorders Department. You can also reach out to the Planning Department to see what information they can provide about your property.
- **Your property survey or deed** should include your lot size.
- **Estimate** If your lot is roughly rectangular, multiply its width times depth. For example, a lot that is 40 feet wide by 60 feet deep is 2,400 square feet.

VERIFYING YOUR PROPERTY LINES AND MAKING A SITE PLAN You may think your property ends at a fence or driveway, but these may have shifted over the years. View the [Mariposa County Property Search Tool](#)  or check with the County Assessor & Recorder's Office. If still needed for your project, hire a surveyor for a detailed map of your property.

- **Real estate websites** Lot size is often listed in the property information on real estate websites. This information may not be fully accurate, so while you can use real estate websites to start planning it's still a good idea to have this information verified before you make concrete decisions.

NEIGHBORHOOD ZONE You will want to know how your property is zoned and related rules about maximum height, setbacks, and other details of how your property is zoned. You can ask the Planning Department for this information or research it yourself. See our Documenting Property Information exercise for instructions on finding these details and see the Directory (final pages) for contact information.



EXERCISES

□ DOCUMENTING PROPERTY INFORMATION

Collect important data you'll need to plan your ADU.

SEE FINAL PGS.
OR USE QR CODE



Special Zones or Districts

Talk to staff to confirm whether your property falls within any of these special zones or areas that may impact what you can build:

TOWN PLANNING AREAS (TPAS) ADUs in TPAs like Catheys Valley and Mariposa Town may have additional requirements, like lot coverage and septic, so talk to County staff early on to understand the rules.

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK (YNP) ADUs within park boundaries will require National Parks Service review and approval. County staff will lead the conversation with YNP and answer your questions about the process.

WILLIAMSON ACT If your home is on land subject to the Land Conservation Act, or Williamson Act, a special process and review is required. However, building an ADU is still very doable, and staff are eager to help you through the process.

HOMEOWNERS ASSOCIATIONS (HOAS) If you live in an HOA, talk with your representative or board early. They cannot prevent you from building or renting an ADU and cannot “unreasonably restrict” construction or design, but they may still have guidelines to consider.





HISTORIC DISTRICTS There may be additional requirements, like in Mariposa or Coulterville, to ensure compatibility. Contact staff early to find out if this applies to you and visit the [Historic Sites & Records Preservation Commission website](#)  to view maps.

SCENIC HIGHWAY OVERLAY DISTRICT There may be additional requirements to ensure compatibility with your existing house and other guidelines. Contact Planning staff early to find out if this applies to you.

WILDFIRE RISK, FIRE HAZARD ZONES, AND STATE RESPONSIBILITY AREAS (SRAS)

Wildfires are a reality throughout our region, which is why it is important to understand the risk in your area. If your property is in a Fire Hazard Severity Zone or SRA there may be additional requirements or reviews. Find out about your location and talk to staff early on to learn how where you live might impact your ADU.

State agencies have developed several resources and guidelines to help. View the [Fire Severity Zone Map](#)  and plug your address into the [Fire Hazard Severity Zone Tool](#)  to look-up your property and identify your zone. Use the [Homeowners Checklist](#)  and review the [Disaster Ready Guide](#)  and [Board of Forestry Code](#)  to make sure your ADU and property are fire safe.

SNOW LOAD, WINDSPEED, SEISMIC ZONE HAZARD Requirements depend on property elevation and location, and almost always factor into ADU plans. Talk to Building Department staff early on to see what additional requirements your team will need to include.

DEED RESTRICTION A deed restriction – set of conditions or rules that are added to the deed for your property – is required by state law for JADUs to prevent them from being sold separately, and for all ADUs to prohibit short-term rentals, and applies to all future owners. Homeowner Associations (HOAs) may require one too. Talk to staff and see the Permitting section for more details. If the ADU you want to build has conditions, think about your goals and make sure that they align.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).



Learn What You Can Build

This section explains the state and local rules that will impact what you can build. ADU laws are updated from time to time, and major state updates were added in 2020 and 2023. You can verify the most up-to-date [ADU rules on our website](#) and when you meet with County staff.

Can I Build an ADU?

In almost all cases, the answer is yes! ADUs and JADUs are allowed in any single-family or multi-family zone. Basically, if residential buildings are allowed, ADUs are almost always allowed too (with limited exceptions for Federal jurisdiction areas, public safety, traffic, and water), including in HOAS.

HOW MANY ADUS CAN I BUILD?

Single-family homeowners can build both an ADU and a JADU on their property. Multifamily properties – like duplexes, triplexes, and apartment buildings – can have two detached ADUs or up to 25 percent of the number of units, depending on your property. Talk to County Staff for more information if interested in building ADUs on a multifamily property. Also, if you are building a new home or multi-family housing, you can permit and build your ADU at the same time.

 [SEE ALL URLS](#) in the Directory (final pages).

 Am I allowed to build an ADU?

A WORD OF ADVICE Even if an ADU is permitted on your property, there may be other limitations. For example, there may be limits to the area of your lot that can be built or restrictions on your recorded parcel map. The good news is that these rules do not apply to conversions of interior space and state law says you can build a detached ADU of up to 800 square feet if it meets height and setback standards.



PHOTO: ROSEMARY ADU STORY, PAGE 70

If needed, demolition permits can be processed at the same time as an ADU permit, instead of waiting for one after the other.



CAN I USE MY GARAGE? Homeowners can convert legally built structures (garage, barn, art studio) into an ADU. JADUs can be converted from an attached garage (but not detached). If you plan on replacing a detached garage with an ADU, demolition permits cannot be withheld and public notice cannot be required if you have your ADU permit (unless it is in an architecturally and historically significant district). Note that garage conversion ADUs may require significant moisture barriers and other design elements to meet building codes and be permitted.

If you demolish your garage or other enclosed structure to build an ADU in its place, the ADU needs to meet current height and setback standards.

SECONDARY RESIDENCES VS. ADUS In Mariposa County, there is a rule on the books that pre-dates ADU laws allowing a second home on your property, so homeowners have a choice of permit. So what's the difference? ADUs have fewer code standards to meet (based on the when the main home was built), while Secondary Residences must meet current height and setback standards. Another is ADUs **cannot** be used for short term rentals, but this may be possible for Secondary Residences. Talk to staff for more information.

Important ADU Laws

OWNER OCCUPANCY Under state law, owner occupancy is not required for properties with ADUs. Although this is set to expire January 1, 2025, it may be extended so check with the Planning Department. However, JADU owners must live in either the JADU or the main home.

SEPARATE ENTRANCES All ADUs must have their own exterior entrance. JADUs must also have an interior entrance if sharing a bathroom with the main home.

SHORT-TERM RENTALS ADUs and JADUs must be rented for more than 30 days, and shorter-term rentals are not permitted.

PARKING

- **Internal ADUs/JADUs** do not require new parking.
- **Attached and detached ADUs** do not require additional parking if they are:
 - In an architecturally or historically significant district
 - Located in an area where on-street parking permits are required but not provided to the occupant
 - Built as a part of new a home

Otherwise, you will need to add one parking spot, but it can be tandem (directly behind another spot in the driveway).

If a garage, carport, or other covered parking structure is demolished or converted as part of an ADU project, those parking spaces do not need to be replaced.

FIRE SAFETY Fire sprinklers are only required if they're also required in the main home. However, sprinklers cannot be required in the main home as a condition to approve the ADU. Any walls and floors shared between the main home and the ADU must be rated for 1-hour fire safety.

Utilities

It's important to understand rules about utility connections (water, sewer, gas, electricity) early in your project. Some of the items below are state law, some are local law, and some might be rules from your service agencies. You can clarify with the County, your service agencies, and through your design team (see the Directory, final pages, for County and utility contact information).

- **J/ADUs constructed along with a new single-family home** must have separate utility connections and be charged the normal connection fee and capacity charge. These charges must be proportional to what the ADU will use compared to the main home (based on square footage, bedrooms, or total plumbing fixtures).

- **Conversion J/ADUs on a single-family lot** are not required to have separate connections and connection fees/capacity charges are not required.
- **All other J/ADUs** require new, separate utility connections, subject to a connection fee or capacity charge that is proportionate to floor area or number of units.

Even when new connections are not required, homeowners may be required to upsize service and/or meters to meet capacity requirements.

WATER AND SEWER If your property is outside of a service area, you will need to find out if your water well and/or septic systems will meet County requirements when adding an ADU. Septic systems usually need to be modified. Contact Environmental Health early on to learn about your existing capacity. For contact information, see the Directory on the final pages.

PG&E services Mariposa County. New connections or upgrades can add time and cost. Depending on where you live, new gas connections may not be allowed. Electrical upgrades 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.





How Big Can My ADU Be?

Maximum height, setbacks, and many other important rules about your property are all found in the zoning rules for your property. See [Learn About Your Property](#) on previous pages for more details.

ADU SIZE ranges from 190 square-foot studios to 1,200 square-foot multiple bedrooms homes and depends on the type of ADU:

- **JADUs** must be less than 500 square feet.
- **Detached ADUs** can be up to 1,200 square feet.
- **Attached ADUs** can be up to 50% of the size of the main home or 1,200 square feet, whichever is less. However, attached ADUs up to 800 square feet are always allowed, even if this is more than 50% of the size of the main home.

ADU HEIGHT

All ADUs may be up to 35 feet, except when the site is sloped, then the ADU may reach 35 feet above the uphill side of the slope.

Height may be increased by up to 10 feet, if all required offsets and setbacks are also increased by 1 foot for each foot of height increase, and the ADU complies with all applicable fire code requirements.

SETBACKS are the distance to the edge of your property from the main home or ADU, and are unique to most properties.

- **JADUs and internal and conversion ADUs** based on your zoning code and main home. Generally, there are no setback requirements for JADUs.
- **Attached and detached ADUs** depends on design and materials, but generally, 25 feet from all property lines and 55 feet from the centerline of the nearest right of way. Side setbacks should be 10% of lot width, and rear setbacks should be 10% of plot depth.
- **Mariposa Town Planning Area (TPA) and Fish Camp TPA** 20 feet from the front property line or edge of any right-of-way boundary, 50 feet from the centerline of a local street or State Highway, 5 feet from side property lines, and 20 feet from the rear property line.
- **Coulterville TPA** same as above, except with an allowance for side property line setbacks of 10% of the total width (and no less than 3 feet). Front yard setbacks must be 50 feet from the centerline of the facing street.

State law now says if you can't fit an ADU in the back or side of your home, you may be able to build it in your front yard, so speak with County staff if that is the case. If you're demolishing an existing enclosed structure (like a detached garage) to build an ADU, it can have the same setbacks as the structure if it's the same size and height.

LOCAL RULES There might be additional rules depending on where you live and the location of your property. For example, if you live in a Planning Area with additional building requirements or seasonal safety issues. Speak with County staff early on and review the [Mariposa County ADU Rules](#) to find out what other standards may apply to your project.

According to state law, you can build an ADU up to 800 square feet, as long as rear and side setbacks are at least 4 feet and it is not over 16 feet tall. No room behind or next to your main home? You can build it in your front yard instead.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).





Meet With Staff

If you decide to move forward, it's a good idea to return with your final design for input before submitting your permit application. Staff will alert you to anything you should know before you submit.

One of the best things you can do is to talk to staff early in the process about potential issues and rules that might apply to your specific property and project. Mariposa County has a Development Services building that houses the Planning, Building, and Environmental Health Departments, where you can ask questions without an appointment, either in person or over the phone. For address and additional contact information see the Directory (final pages).

This conversation should cover specifics on your lot and the size, location, and type of ADU you want to build. It should also cover additional design guidelines, parking requirements, fees, and utilities as relevant. Consult the Staff Meeting Worksheet in our interactive exercises for a list of questions to ask and be sure to bring this guidebook and information you've already collected.



EXERCISES

SEE FINAL PGS. OR USE QR CODE

STAFF MEETING WORKSHEET

Questions to ask and space to take notes.



Adjust Your Budget

Once you know more about the possible size and type of your ADU, revisit your budget estimates as needed. This is a good time to create a plan for financing your project – see our Budgeting & Finance section for more details.





SECTION THREE

Budgeting & Finance



Estimate Project Costs



Assess Financing Options

PLUS:

- Getting a loan
- Taxes and resale

Project Timeline

Budgeting is part of the planning phase, which typically takes 1-3 months. Most ADU projects take 12-18 months to complete, but some extend to 24 months or more.

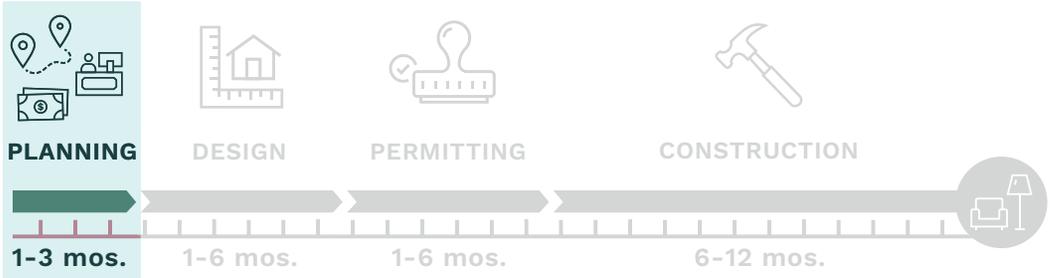


PHOTO: NEW AVENUE HOMES



Estimate Project Cost

? What will it cost?

If you have a tax or financial advisor, it's a good idea to check in with them early.

The Design, Permitting, and Construction sections contain more specifics about costs.

[SEE ALL URLS](#) in the Directory (final pages).

Your budget is one of the most important parts of your ADU project. You will need to balance design with what you can afford, but also consider potential rental income. A larger or higher-end ADU will likely go for more rent and may result in a larger loan. But if you wish to rent it at an affordable rent, you may need to compromise on size and/or design.

If you haven't already, now is the time to estimate your project costs. A very rough placeholder for you to use is \$200-350 per square foot, including construction ("hard costs") and other costs like design and fees ("soft costs"). The real number can vary widely and depends on many factors. Hard costs (construction) is typically 85% of your total project budget.

The [Mariposa County ADU Calculator](#) is a great place to start when developing a budget. It provides a rough estimate of costs, fees, and rents and will help you understand how choices can impact your budget over time.

Keep in mind those initial estimates are likely to change and you can't know specifics until you talk to your professional team (designer, contractor, etc.). It's also important to consider the cost of insuring your ADU.



EXERCISES

- BUDGETING EXERCISE** Get started with financial planning for your ADU.

SEE FINAL PAGES OR USE QR CODE





Assess Financing Options

FINANCING OPTIONS TO CONSIDER

	HIGH INCOME	LOW INCOME
HIGH HOME EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cash savings• Cash-out refinance• Home equity loan/HELOC	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cash-out refinance• Home equity loan/HELOC• CalHFA Grant
LOW HOME EQUITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cash savings• Renovation loan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Financing typically unavailable• Loans from friends or family• CalHFA Grant

Many homeowners use a mix of options to finance their ADU, including savings, funds from family, and/or loans. **It is strongly recommended that your financing is in place before construction starts.** Be sure to factor in potential rental income since that will help you repay loans.

CASH OR OTHER EASY-ACCESS MONEY

Homeowners often use assets like cash or stocks to pay for some or all construction costs. Some may also withdraw retirement savings, which usually includes a penalty. While this can be a viable option, it should be considered with caution.

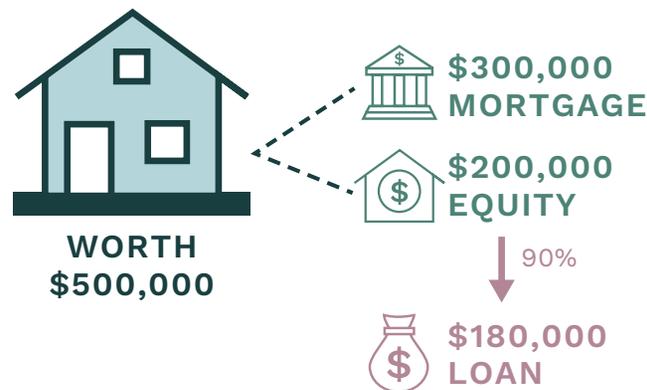
LOANS FROM FRIENDS OR FAMILY Some homeowners borrow from friends or family. This can benefit everyone if the person lending gets a higher interest rate and the person borrowing pays less than they would on the market. Another option is planning for friends or family to live in the ADU – they live rent free in exchange for contributing money for construction. In either case, you should come to a formal agreement and have a lawyer prepare a contract, not just with a handshake. There are companies that can help formalize an agreement and administer payments if you want – search online for terms like “friends and family loan payments.”

CAL HFA ADU GRANTS At the time of publication, The California Housing Finance Agency (Cal HFA) ADU Program provides grants of up to \$40,000 to qualified homeowners for the reimbursement of ADU pre-development costs, including impact fees. To qualify, a homeowner must be low or moderate income. See the [Cal HFA website](#) for details and to check if funding is currently available.

SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).

HOME EQUITY Your equity in your home is the portion of your home's value that you own outright. It is calculated by subtracting your current mortgage balance(s) from the value of your home. Homeowners with sufficient equity in their homes (at least 15-20%) can take out a second loan or line of credit.

Banks will typically offer a loan that is 90% of the equity a person has in their property. For example, if you have a \$500,000 home and a \$300,000 mortgage, since you own \$200,000, the bank can offer you \$180,000 (.90 x \$200,000). Or a \$300,000 home and a \$50,000 mortgage, since you own \$250,000, the bank can offer you \$225,000 (.90 x \$250,000).



LOANS FROM A LENDER If you think you may want to borrow, you'll need to figure out how large a loan you qualify for (and feel comfortable with). Banks usually require two things: equity from your home and enough income to make payments. A good option is to call a mortgage broker and/or a bank, explain that you are considering building an ADU, and ask about loan options. Brokers and lenders consider it a normal question and will be happy to talk. There is no obligation and no cost for an initial conversation.

FEDERAL LOANS FOR NEW HOMEOWNERS

If you are planning to buy a house and build an ADU, the Federal National Mortgage Association's (Fannie Mae) Homestyle loan program may be a good fit for your project. The Homestyle loan allows you to finance both the purchase of a home and the costs of remodeling, building an ADU, or converting your garage in one single loan. This is potentially a good option for someone that intends on purchasing a home and immediately undertaking some construction or remodeling. Not every lender offers this program, so it may take a bit of searching to find the right lender if one of these programs is a fit for your situation.

Getting a Loan

Finding a Broker or Bank

If you are going to get a loan, you will need to work with a mortgage broker or bank. Like many other aspects of building an ADU, one size does not fit all. It is important to talk to different brokers and lenders to figure out what works best for you, depending on your income, home equity, and credit score. While it will require a bit of homework, you don't need to make this decision right away.

 **MORTGAGE BROKERS** shop to find the best option for you and are not affiliated with a specific bank or lender. The benefit of going with a broker is they are required by law to offer you products that are in your best interest and work with a variety of lenders and loan providers.

To find a mortgage broker, start by asking friends, neighbors, or people in your social network for recommendations. You can reach out to local real estate agencies since they usually have lists of mortgage brokers who have done work for their clients. The [California Association of Mortgage Brokers](#)  has an online member directory and the California Department of Real Estate and California Department of Corporations maintain a [listing of all brokers with valid licenses](#)  where you can crosscheck recommendations.



BANKS OR CREDIT UNIONS provide a variety of loans to finance your ADU by using your home equity. The benefit of going with a bank, especially if you have an existing relationship with one, is they may be able to offer you a rate or products that cannot be offered by a broker or other banks.

To find out more about what banks can provide, start by talking with your current mortgage company or bank. It's also a good idea to contact other banks about what they can offer. Don't forget to consider local banks and credit unions that may be more familiar with financing options for small homes, including ADUs.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).



Getting a Loan

CHOOSING A BROKER OR BANK

	POTENTIAL PROS	POTENTIAL CONS
 MORTGAGE BROKERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They will have access to more financial products and can work with various companies or lenders.• Legally they must find the best deals available for you.• They may have more creative financing options available if your financial situation is unique, such as lower income or equity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Working with a broker often requires building a new relationship.• They may not work with credit unions or smaller programs.
 BANKS OR CREDIT UNIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They may have access to different financial products not available to mortgage brokers.• One place for all your accounts like mortgage and retirement if they currently manage your portfolio.• The loan process all happens through one institution.• An existing relationship can feel more comfortable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They can only work with their available financial products and portfolio.• They do not have to disclose how much money they are making from your loan.• Depending on your financial situation, such as lower income or equity, they may be more conservative in what they can offer.

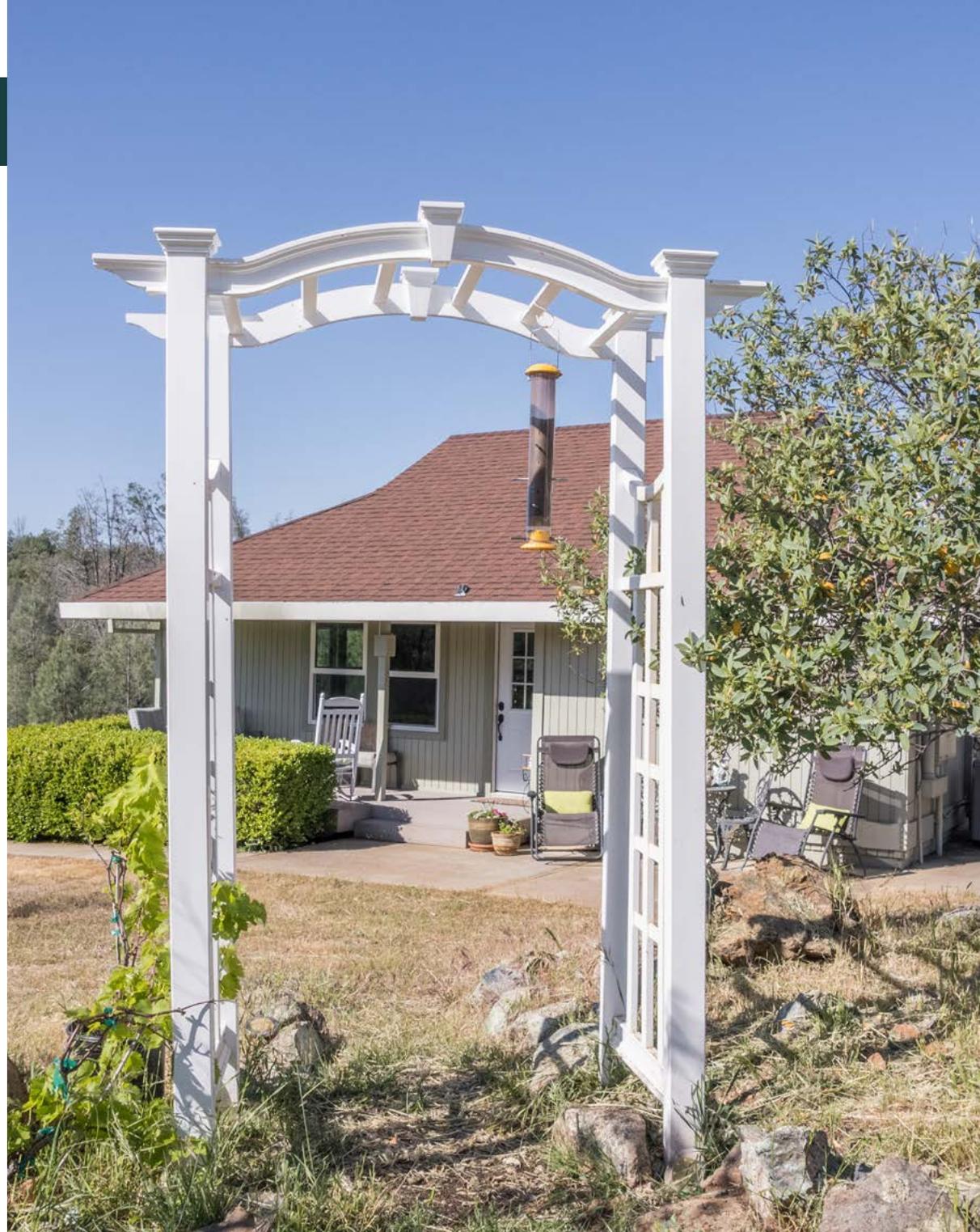
Getting a Loan

Loan Types

Generally, you don't have to worry too much about the different loans available because your bank or mortgage broker will walk you through the various options. Common loan products are summarized below.

 **CASH-OUT REFINANCE** Homeowners with more than 15% equity in their property can refinance their mortgage to pull cash out. This replaces your existing mortgage with a new one. This is best done when rates are lower or comparable to the current rate.

 **HOME EQUITY LOANS OR HOME EQUITY LINES OF CREDIT (HELOC)** Homeowners with sufficient equity in their home (at least 15%) can take out a second loan or line of credit. These types of loans work well if you prefer to take out a second, smaller mortgage instead of refinancing at a higher interest rate. Typically, these loans are variable rate mortgages (meaning the interest rate changes) and have no initiation fees. To qualify, you'll need to show you make sufficient income to cover the cost of your current debts plus the additional debt you'll be taking on. One advantage is the homeowner does not start paying interest until the money is spent.



Taxes & Resale

? How will an ADU affect my taxes?

Adding an ADU will likely affect your property taxes and the resale value of your home. However, your main house will not be reassessed, and your property taxes will only increase based on the added value of your ADU. For example, if you build an ADU that adds \$150,000 to your property value, and your tax rate is 1%, your taxes will increase by $1\% \times \$150,000$, or \$1,500 per year.

Building a JADU will have a significantly smaller impact on assessed value. In some cases, your taxes will not increase at all. Home sharing will also not increase the assessed value of your home. Generally, garage conversions will not raise your tax bill as much as new construction, but they will also not add as much value.

Each property will require a one-on-one analysis to determine the added value of an ADU, so contact the Mariposa County Assessor & Recorder's Office once you have an idea of your plan. Visit [their website](#) or see the Directory (final pages) for contact information.

Adding an ADU may impact your income taxes as well. This can be rather complicated, and it's best to discuss these with a tax advisor. The rental income you receive for your ADU is taxable, but you can deduct the cost of allowable maintenance and depreciate the cost of construction, which can often reduce or eliminate any tax increase. You may also have capital gains tax related to the increased value when you sell your property.

Note that your ADU could be assessed in different ways for different purposes. If you are trying to get a loan, the bank might be more conservative and assume the value of your home will increase less.

SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).



SECTION FOUR

Design



Hire Your Team



Create the Initial Design



Consider Different Kinds of Plans



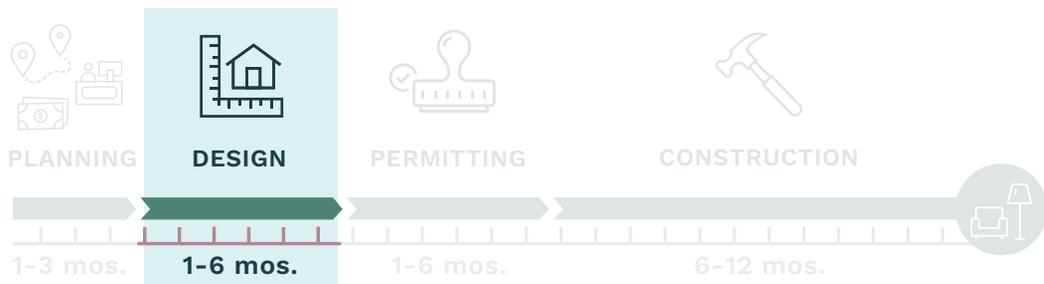
Finalize Your Design

PLUS:

- Prefab Plans Examples
- Floorplans Inspiration

Project Timeline

The Design phase typically takes 1-6 months. Most ADU projects take 12-18 months to complete, but some extend to 24 months or more.



Good sources for ADU design inspiration include the [Stories and Floorplans on our ADU website](#) and the [ADU Plans Gallery](#).

SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).

Before You Begin Design

It is helpful to have a clear sense of what you want early in the process. If you have not made some basic decisions, like the type of ADU and how many bedrooms, it is difficult to begin. An architect or designer can help you brainstorm, but they cannot start designing until these decisions are made.

Also, make sure you and your design team have reviewed all standards and rules that apply. See the Learning the Rules section for more details. It saves a lot of time and frustration in design and permitting to have met with County staff first to discuss your property and all the applicable rules.



EXERCISES

- INITIAL DESIGN EXERCISE**
Notes and questions to start the process.
- DESIGN IDEAS EXERCISE**
Initial thoughts on finishes and fixtures.



SEE FINAL PGS. OR USE QR CODE





Consider Different Kinds of Plans

Types of ADU Construction

There are two types of construction to consider for your project. Both have pros and cons, so it can help to think about what you want, like the level of customization you want and how the ADU would work on your specific property (like slopes and obstacles for installation).



SITE-BUILT is a traditionally constructed ADU built from scratch on your property (AKA “stick-built”). This option allows for a lot of customization and smaller changes to be made throughout the construction process.



PREFAB/MANUFACTURED/PANELIZED are built in a factory, then shipped to your site to be assembled or placed on a foundation. Some companies will provide a “turnkey” service that includes help with permitting and all on-site construction, from laying the foundation to utility hookups. If not, you’ll need to hire additional professionals to help.

There isn’t always a hard line between prefab and site-built. Some prefab designs are highly customizable.



Prefabricated ADUs

When first looking into prefab ADUs, you might hear different terms like panelized, modular, prefabricated, and manufactured, and it can be confusing to understand, much less make decisions about. Two things separate these ADUs: how they are built and how they are inspected.

These terms cover a large variety of construction techniques and building types, from framing kits and panelized or SIPs (Structurally Insulated Panels), to complete manufactured homes arriving on a flatbed truck that are lifted by a crane or towed into place. Each type has a different level of inspection that is required to make sure it meets building code.

PARTIALLY-FABRICATED (PANELIZED, FRAMING-KITS) Some or parts of the ADU are built off site at a factory, and construction follows a traditional site-built pattern. Local inspectors check work at different stages as it is assembled, and a local General Contractor and their crew are responsible for putting all the pieces together and passing inspections.

PREFABRICATED (MODULAR, MANUFACTURED, FACTORY-BUILT) The ADU is built and inspected for building code off site at a factory. It is then delivered and put in place on your property by either a crane or tow. Local inspectors only check work like foundation and utility hook-ups. So what's the differences between modular, manufactured and prefabricated then? The type of building code rules they meet, like state and/or federal. They are all similar in how they are constructed.

Using a prefab design can save time and give you a complete picture of what your ADU will look and feel like. However, it's important to keep in mind that they typically offer less customization and cost the same as site-built ADUs. People are often surprised at the cost, but transportation, crane, foundation, and sales tax can end up being 20-40% of the total cost. There are more options available now than ever before though, so finding one that fits your property and budget while meeting local rules is totally doable.

To explore prefab or modular ADU options, you will want to get in touch with companies directly. They will visit, evaluate your property, and make recommendations.

Consider a Prefab ADU Plan

Here are four plans ranging from 1 bedroom and 1 bath, to 3 bedroom and 2 bath homes available from local companies. Visit our [ADU Plans Gallery](#) to view and compare these and other plans.

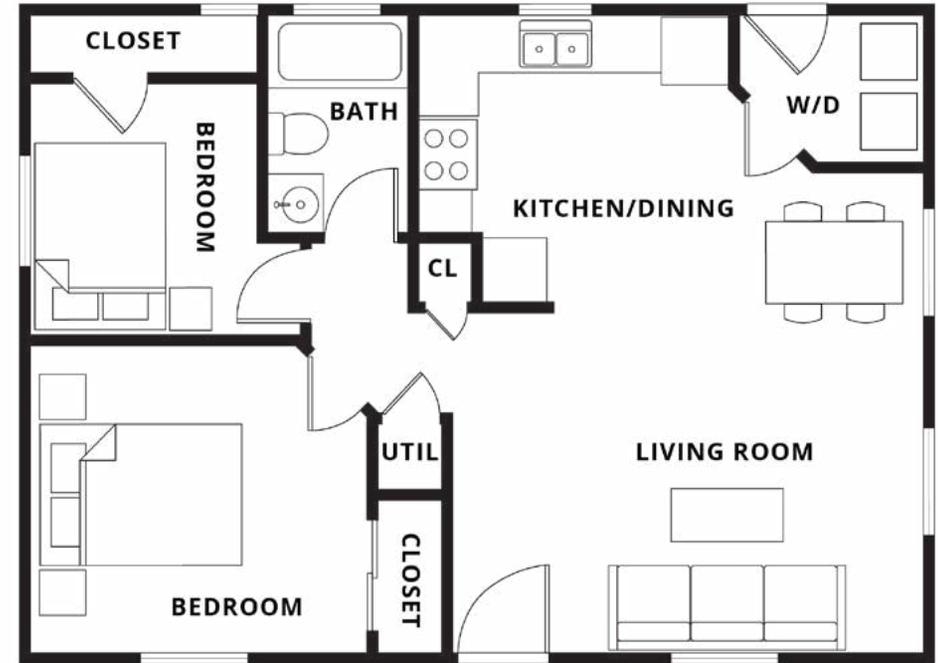
SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).



5400 ADU

MANUFACTURER	Skyline Homes
SIZE	745 square feet
BED / BATH	2 / 1
FEATURES	Utility room w washer/dryer hookups

745 square feet 2 bedroom/1 bathroom with an open floor plan. Utility room with washer and dryer hookups.



Although prefab ADUs are inspected before they are shipped, you will still need to go through an inspection process for things like foundation and utilities, especially if using septic. Talk to staff early on to find out what the requirements are for your property.

Prefab ADUs often cost the same as site-built ADUs once you add in transportation, crane, foundation, and sales tax. However, they can save you a lot of time on design and construction.

Humboldt Bay ADU

MANUFACTURER	Skyline Homes
SIZE	1,135 square feet
BEDROOMS	3
BATHROOMS	2
FEATURES	Walk-in closets, kitchen island, covered porch

1,135 square feet 3 bedroom/2 bathroom with walk-in-closets, kitchen island, dining area, primary bathroom suite and a covered porch.



Not all prefab companies provide a “turnkey” service that includes help with permitting, utility hook-ups, and inspections. You may need to hire someone else to take care of these parts of the project. Be sure to ask the prefab companies you are considering what services they offer.



Elmore Bay ADU

MANUFACTURER	Skyline Homes
SIZE	1,035 square feet
BEDROOMS	2
BATHROOMS	2
FEATURES	Utility room w washer/dryer hookups, walk-in closet, covered porch

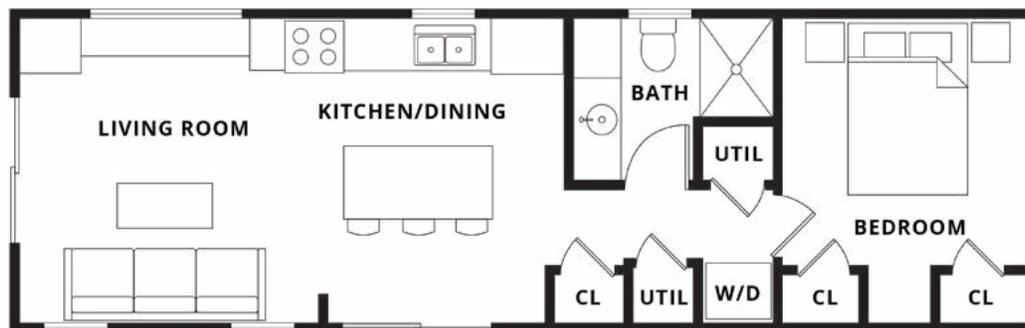
1,035 square feet 2 bedroom/2 bathroom with open floor plan, separated bedrooms, primary bathroom suite and walk-in-closet, utility room with washer and dryer hookups, and a covered porch.



D400 ADU

MANUFACTURER	Skyline Homes
SIZE	560 square ft.
BED / BATH	1 / 1
FEATURES	Washer/dryer

560 square feet 1 bedroom/1 bathroom with combined living room and kitchen, featuring an island. Washer and dryer hook up in the hallway.





Consider a Design From the ADU Plans Gallery

The County has developed an ADU Plans Gallery that provides owners interested in building an ADU with an easy way to compare dozens of pre-existing plans, saving you both time and money. Like many online shopping experiences, you can filter by the kind of ADU you want (number of bedrooms, square footage, features) then view photos, floorplans, and details of all the designs you like. You can then connect directly with the designer or prefab company to customize your plan to local rules and your property. Visit the [Plans Gallery](#)  to begin.

In addition to the prefab plans shared in this Guidebook, you'll also find:

PRE-EXISTING PLANS ADU designs submitted by architects, designers, and builders that can easily be customized to fit your property and needs. Instead of paying for the entire cost of initial and construction drawings, this step is already completed, resulting in a significantly reduced design cost. All you pay is a fee to use the plan and a fee for a designer or architect to customize it based on local rules and property or zone requirements.

PRE-REVIEWED PLANS A subset of pre-existing plans that have been designed and/or reviewed by the other California jurisdictions to ensure they meet building code requirements. Some may be free and others you will pay a designer to license. Either way, they will still need to be customized based on local rules and your property or zone requirements.

STATE/FEDERAL PRE-APPROVED PREFAB PLANS Some prefab plans have also been reviewed by the State of California or federally through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to ensure they meet building code requirements. They may need to be customized, particularly for hazards like snow loads, and your site plan will depend on local rules and your property or zone requirements.

Selecting any of these plans will cost you less time and money than starting from scratch.

Every property and ADU project is different, and customization of your ADU and/or site plan is always required based on local rules, your property, and location.

 [SEE ALL URLS](#) in the Directory (final pages).



Hire Your Team

Although you can build an ADU as an owner builder, we strongly recommend hiring a licensed architect or designer and a licensed contractor, or a design/build team, and most homeowners do.

Working with a professional early on is often the key to getting your ADU approved quickly, managed efficiently, and built cost-effectively. Relevant experience and fit are critical and it's important to look at their past work and check references.

Typically, you'll start by hiring an architect or designer and then a contractor to complete construction (unless you're using a design/build company that performs both roles). However, contractors often book early and have helpful thoughts about the cost impacts of design features, so you may consider adding them to your team early on. It's also okay to pay one contractor for consultation during design but then hire another for construction after you've received bids (see the Construction section for more details).

Although hiring an architect is not strictly required, hiring a professional to design and build your ADU is highly recommended.



ADU Professionals

ARCHITECT A design professional who has passed a licensing exam by the state. Architects take legal responsibility for their work and provide a range of services, including full-service support from start to finish. They tend to bill at a higher rate than designers, but their expertise can save money (and stress) in the end.

DESIGNER A design professional that either has architectural training but is not licensed, is self-taught, or like most, falls somewhere in between. The term is not regulated, and anyone can call themselves a designer. Services provided vary, so be sure to ask about their experience and if they've designed ADUs before.

CONTRACTOR A firm licensed by the state who specializes in construction. They will work with your designer or

architect to finalize plans, budgets, and permits, then manage the construction once it begins.

DESIGN/BUILD A company that will design your ADU, manage the process, and build it. The term is not regulated, but most often they are run by a licensed contractor who has designers or architects and builders on staff.

PREFAB/MODULAR A company with preset designs of prefab or modular homes. Some or most of the ADU is built off-site, then shipped to your property and installed by a contractor.

SEPTIC SYSTEM AND WELL PROFESSIONALS A company that maintains, installs, repairs or expands the capacity of septic tanks, sewer lines, drains and water wells.

? How do I find a designer?

The American Institute of Architects provides helpful information for homeowners and maintains a [local Sierra Valley chapter website](#) where you can find professionals accepting new work.

SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).

Finding Your Designer

ADUs may be smaller homes, but finalizing a design can be a big project. A designer will combine your ideas and goals with ADU standards to turn them into a real, buildable plan. That’s why it’s very important to find someone who has experience and a communication style that fits with yours. Personal connections can help, especially since designers are busy. Talk with neighbors or friends who have completed an addition or renovation and ask if they know any designers they’d recommend and consider if you have any designers (or contractors) in your community (faith community, social network, neighbors).

A potential architect or designer will start by visiting your home to talk with you about what you’re thinking about. If it seems like a good match, they will prepare a proposal detailing their services and fees. Designers typically charge for an initial consultation or proposal. The American Institute of Architects recommends you meet with three to five options before making a hiring decision.

You may also need to hire other professionals, including a structural engineer and landscape architect. Your designer can usually point you to recommendations.

MOTHER LODE ADU CONTRACTOR LIST

Learn about contractors who work on ADUs in our area [on our website](#). This list includes professionals who participated in outreach events or requested to be included. It is not vetted and serves as an informational resource only. Do your research and reference the rest of this section before hiring anyone.



EXERCISES

- DESIGNER CONSIDERATIONS EXERCISE Questions to consider when choosing a designer.



SEE FINAL PAGES OR USE QR CODE



Design Costs and Contracts

Design costs vary with every project, but a rule of thumb is that it will cost 10-20% of the total construction budget. A written contract protects you and is California State Law for licensed architects. You may want to have a lawyer review it to make sure all your concerns are covered before you sign.

Typically, design professionals use one of three methods:

FIXED FEE They will give you a maximum price based on project needs. If the project takes more or less time to complete, their prices do not change.

TIME AND MATERIALS They will bill you for their hours, which works best if there are too many unknowns early on. To protect yourself and comply with California State Law, these contracts must identify the total contract amount, start and stop dates, and a payment schedule with details on completed work in dollars and cents.

NOT TO EXCEED They will bill you for their hours but also agree upon maximum amounts for each phase.

SAMPLE DESIGN COSTS

	BASIC STUDIO	HIGH-END 2-BR	% OF TOTAL
CONCEPT/SCHEMATICS	\$1,600	\$3,200	15%
REFINEMENT & PERMITS	\$3,200	\$6,400	30%
CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS	\$4,300	\$8,500	40%
BIDDING, NEGOTIATION, & CONSTRUCTION	\$1,600	\$3,200	15%
TOTAL	\$10,700	\$21,300	100%

THESE REPRESENT TYPICAL COSTS, BUT EVERY PROJECT IS DIFFERENT AND COSTS WILL VARY. ALL COSTS ARE DERIVED FROM DESIGN COSTS IN 2022.



GRAPHIC: SMALLWORKS



Create the Initial Design

Title 24 regulates minimum energy efficiency for new construction in California, like how much insulation is required and the types of light fixtures that can be used. All new ADUs need to comply with Title 24, which usually requires hiring a consultant (less than \$500). Newly constructed detached ADUs generally require new solar panels to meet the rules. The panels can be installed on the ADU or the main home.

Garage conversion ADUs may require significant moisture barriers to meet building codes.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

Once you have your team in place, you will work with them to design your ADU. Together you will consider size, use, layout, specific project needs (storage, laundry room, etc.), architectural style, and privacy.

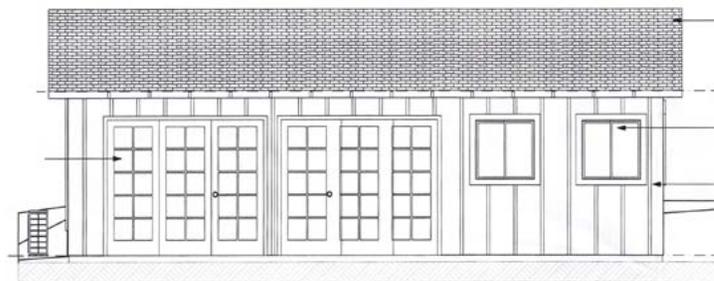
CONCEPTUAL DRAWINGS Your designer will take measurements of your property and develop concept drawings, including the type of ADU, floorplan, and its relationship to the main house and outside areas. Drawings are usually quick and inexpensive and can help you figure out what you want. Construction costs and [County ADU Rules](#)  should be discussed at every stage, so if your designer does not bring them up, you should.

REFINED DRAWINGS Once you have concept drawings, the designer will refine their work. They will ask more questions about your goals, and you will have to start choosing components, like doors and windows. At the end of this stage, there will be a drawing done to scale that covers the layout and all the major systems like heating and electrical.

Getting Advice on Your Design

Once you have a design, it's a good idea to discuss it with staff so they can point out any issues before you and your professional team submit your permit application. They may be able to give you a fee estimate at this time. Your designer can attend this meeting to clarify drawings and help you understand requirements.

See the Directory (final pages) for staff contact information.



ELEVATION: ROSEMARY ADU STORY, PAGE 70

Contacting Utility Services

This is a good time to reach out to the agencies that provide vital services like water, sewer, gas, and electricity to see if their requirements will impact your design or timeline. Some utility connections like gas or septic may require significant excavation or construction. Your design team will know how to navigate these logistics, so make sure they're involved as well. This is also a good chance to confirm connection and service fees.

Some utilities will be coordinated by the County and others by outside agencies. See the Directory (final pages) for contact information and see Important ADU Laws in the Learning the Rules section for more details on utility connections.



Finalize Design

Based on your meeting with County staff, you and your team will work through any required changes and prepare the permit application (see Permitting section for full details).

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

Consider Universal Design

While you are designing an ADU for right now, the needs of you and your family will most likely change over time. It may eventually house a parent, grandparent, you in your retirement, or a friend or tenant that has additional needs. It's a good idea to consider design features now that will help you then, like more accessible bathrooms, wider doors and hallways, and easier to use fixtures. Talk with your team about options to future proof your ADU.

Homeowners are often surprised by fire separation requirements for attached ADUs (shared walls and floors must be rated for 1-hour fire safety). Considering sound- and odor-proofing may also be a good investment.



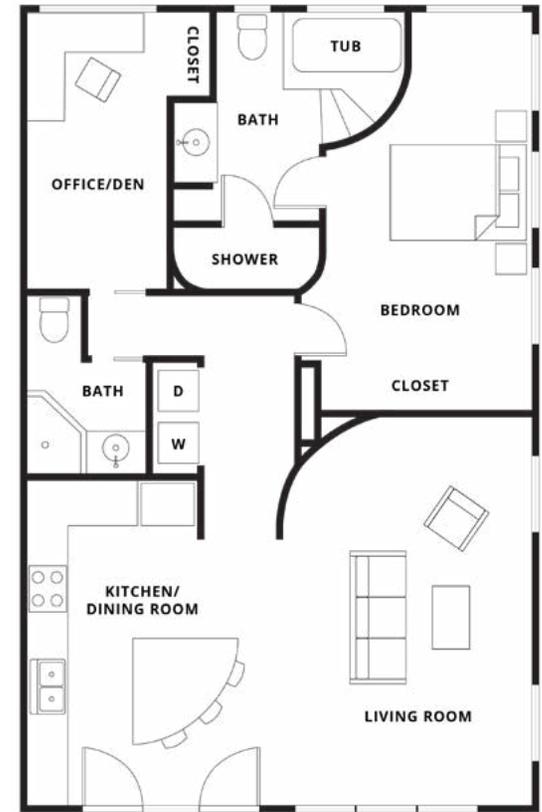


ADU STORY

Richard FLEXIBLE HOUSING FOR FAMILY



My family has lived here for seven generations, so this community has been part of my life for as long as I can remember. I studied architecture in New York, and when our second son was born we moved back to Nevada City. This property had a separate workshop that we decided to convert into an ADU for my wife’s mother. I wanted the ADU to be a unique and comfortable home. It’s easy to build a bedroom and a kitchen, but it’s important to think about the colors, materials, and finishes that make a real home. The ADU turned out beautifully, we love the curved walls and modern finishes, and the patio and deck make a wonderful outdoor living and dining space.

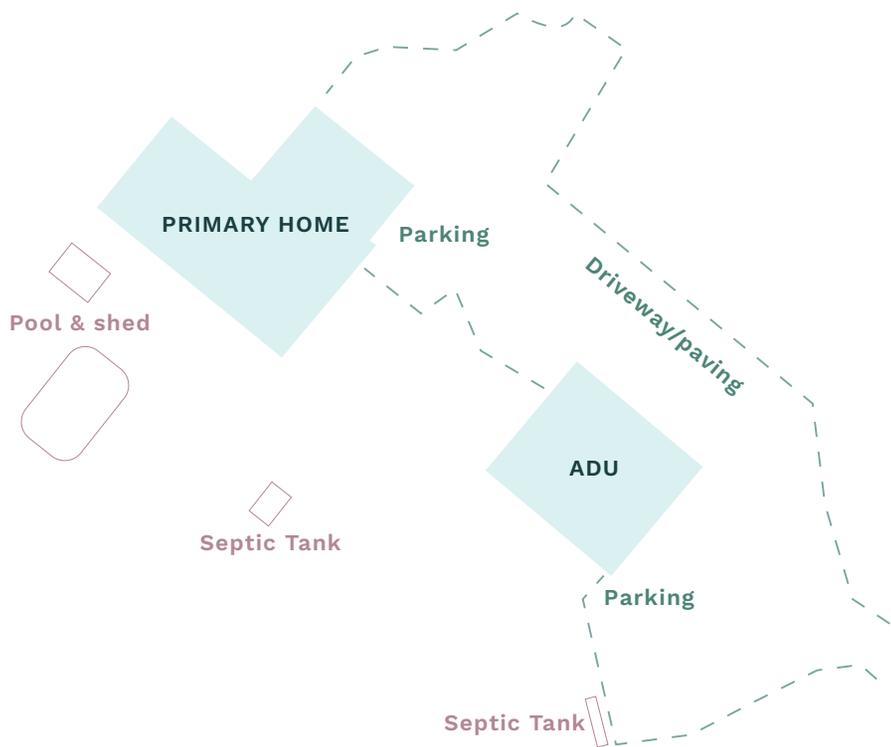


“ I’m proud of the ADU, it’s a beautiful space and we use it to meet so many different needs for our family and the community.

Design and construction took about nine months. We worked with a septic team to build a new system on a tight budget, and we talked with the fire department about safety requirements, like building fire truck access to the ADU and using fire safe materials for the Wildland Urban Interface. Construction wasn’t cheap, but it was worth it. The added value to the property and rental income are a return on investment that balances everything out.

While my mother-in-law lived here, we loved spending time in the ADU. Now our kids are grown and have children of their own, so they stay in the ADU when they visit and have a comfortable, private space. As my wife and I grow older we might move into the ADU and rent out the larger house, or give it to our children. We’ve rented out the ADU over the years and had great experiences with our tenants. We’ve met so many interesting people, and we’re still friends with some of them. I’m proud of the ADU, it’s a beautiful space and we use it to meet so many different needs for our family and the community.

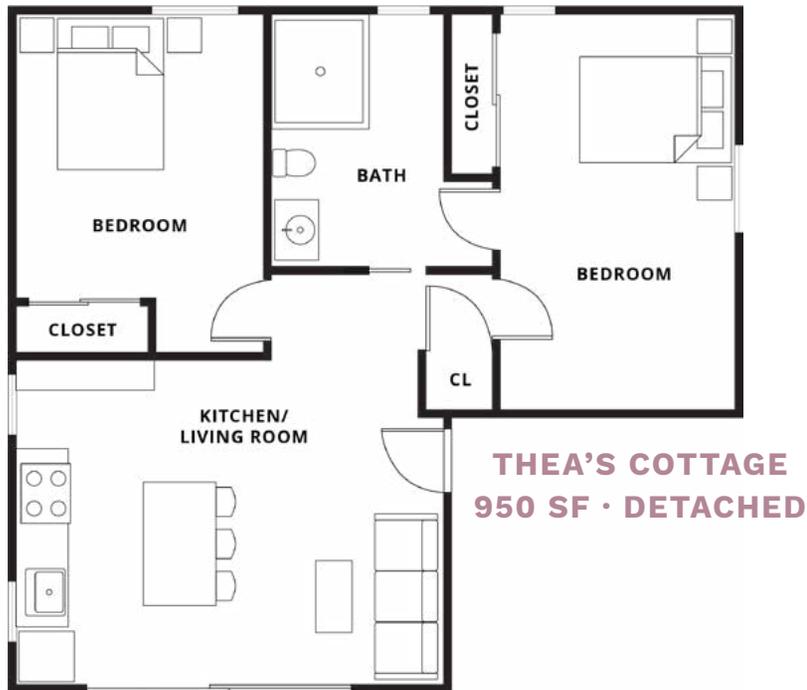
LOCATION	Nevada City
TYPE/LOCATION	Detached, 2 bedroom
PRICE	\$200,000
COMPLETED	2008
TIME	8 months
SIZE	1,000 square feet



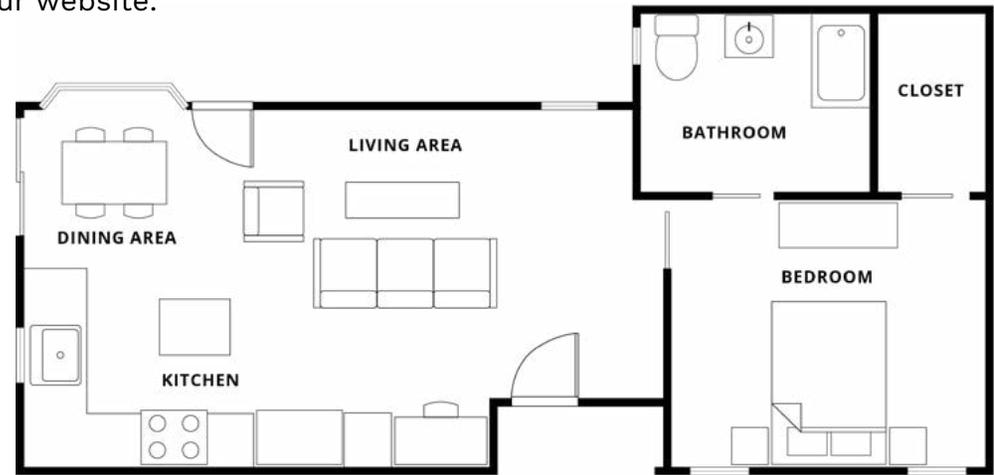
Floorplans Inspiration

SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).

Here are a few floorplans from real-world ADUs in California. See more in the [Floorplans Inspiration Gallery](#) on our website.



THEA'S COTTAGE
950 SF · DETACHED



MEREDITH'S ADDITION · 700 SF · ATTACHED CONVERSION



MARK'S TEACHER HOUSING
300 SF · DETACHED



BRENDA'S GARAGE APARTMENT
576 SF · GARAGE CONVERSION



ADAM'S SIDYARD UNIT
280 SF · DETACHED



SECTION FIVE

Permitting



Prepare Your Application



Revise Your Application



Submit Your Application



Receive Your Permits

PLUS:

- Permitting fees

Project Timeline

The Permitting phase typically takes 1-6 months. Most ADU projects take 12-18 months to complete, but some extend to 24 months or more.



Permitting Overview

CONSIDER HIRING A PROFESSIONAL

California Law allows homeowners to submit an owner-builder application, but many who start down this path have a hard time. The process can be technical and complex, and they are liable if anything goes wrong. Generally, it is better to have a professional on your side, which is why most homeowners choose to work with one through the permitting process.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

Application Steps

Once your ADU plans are finalized, you and your designer or contractor will lead the process to prepare an application, which will include the following steps:

1. Use the [ADU Checklist](#)  and talk with staff to understand what you need to submit.
2. Prepare your permit application, meet with County staff, and request a new address for your ADU from the County Assessor & Recorder's Office if needed.
3. Submit your application, plans, fees, and other materials online or in person to the Building Department.
4. Staff will review your complete application within two weeks and let you know if any revisions are needed. Other departments and outside agencies like the Mariposa Public Utility District will review it if needed.
5. Once your application is approved and all fees are paid,* you can collect your permit.

* Including School District fees for ADUs 500 square feet or more.

Application & Plan Review

BUILDING DEPARTMENT REVIEW makes sure your plan is safe and meets all local and state building code requirements, like electrical, insulation, ventilation, plumbing, foundation, and seismic safety. Building codes are nearly identical from place to place, but the County may have some differences for local safety issues. The Building Department also manages any required review by other departments and agencies.

PLANNING DEPARTMENT REVIEW makes sure your plan meets zoning standards, like how big and tall an ADU can be and where on the property it can be located.

HISTORIC DESIGN REVIEW may be required if your property is in a Design Review Overlay. View the maps available on the [Historic Sites & Records Preservation Commission website](#)  or talk with County staff to find out.

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE REVIEW may be required if your property is within Yosemite National Park. County planning staff will send your application directly to NPS and guide you through any additional requirements.



Prepare Your Application Package

Your team will lead the process to prepare an application package. Requirements may vary based on the specifics of your property, but applications to Mariposa County typically include:

- Three sets of building plans
- Six complete and signed site plans
- Soil inspection report or waiver request
- Three sets of grading plans (if applicable)
- Two complete sets of sprinkler plans and water supply calculations (if applicable)
- Completed Grading Permit Requirement Determination Worksheet
- Completed Mariposa County Development Residential Permit Application
- Title 24 Energy Calculations (if applicable)
- Permit fees

You can find an application checklist and other forms on the [Mariposa County Building webpage](#). County Staff and your professional team will help you collect these materials and navigate the application process.

TALK WITH COUNTY STAFF Before submitting your application, it's a good idea for you and your designer to meet with staff so they can review it. While not required, this step can make sure you get your permit as soon as possible. This is a great time to ask about the possible need for special permits, utility concerns, and/or approximate fee totals. See our Staff Meeting Worksheet for more questions you might want to ask.

ADDRESS ASSIGNMENT This is a great time to request an address assignment. Planning, Building, or Assessor & Recorder's Office are ready to assist. See the Directory (final pages) for contact information.

DEED RESTRICTION Required for JADUs to prevent them from being sold separately, attached to the land, and applies to all future owners as well.



EXERCISES

- STAFF MEETING WORKSHEET** Collect and organize details for your application.

SEE FINAL PGS. OR USE QR CODE



SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).

If you need to demolish a garage to replace it with an ADU, your demolition permit application can be processed at the same time as your ADU permit application. Talk to County staff for more details.





What if I have an unpermitted ADU?

An unpermitted ADU can make it difficult to sell or refinance your property. If the ADU is being built, the County can issue a stop work order and the owner may be subject to penalty fees.

For unpermitted ADUs built before January 1, 2018, state law says a permit to legalize cannot be denied even if there is a violation of ADU laws or building standards, unless it is a “health and safety concern” or if the building is deemed “substandard” by state Health and Safety Code.

What if I have a building code violation or unpermitted structure on my property? State law says local governments cannot deny an ADU permit based on other structures on the property, like fencing or an unpermitted garage, unless there is an obvious health and safety concern.



Submit Your Application

Once your application is prepared, you and your designer or contractor will submit your application package online or in person to the Building Department. You should have an idea of how permitting and approval works from your conversations with staff, and your team should be familiar with the process as well.

Initial plan review generally takes two weeks. Once it is deemed complete—meaning you correctly submitted all required materials and details—other departments and agencies will review it as needed. Under state law, the County, utility agencies, and special districts have 60 days after your

application is deemed complete for their review. Once all departments and agencies have completed their review, staff will share all comments and required revisions with you and your team. If an application is denied, a full set of comments with a list of incorrect items and how those can be remedied must be provided.

State law says local governments cannot comment on zoning issues unrelated to the ADU. For example, you should not receive comments about the main house or a fence, unless there is an obvious public safety issue.



Revise Your Application

After receiving comments, you and your designer will revise and resubmit your application. Depending on the completeness of the application, most projects require one to three rounds of review. Most likely, this review will happen at a staff level (no hearings), although your project may require a discretionary permit and a hearing if you're asking to do something outside of the normal rules or your project has special conditions.

This step takes as long as the number of reviews and depends on how quickly revisions are completed. Be prepared that staff may bring up new comments in later reviews.

PUBLIC HEARINGS: THE EXCEPTION Most ADUs will not require a public hearing, but if your ADU does not comply with the normal rules, like exceeding size or height limits or requiring a special permit, it may need an additional review.



Receive Your Permits

BUILDING PERMITS give you official permission to start construction and are required for all ADU projects.

After your application is approved, staff will let you know that your permit is ready. Building permits must be picked up in person at the Mariposa County Building Department, where you will pay the associated Building Permit fee, sign for the permit, and receive your copy of the approved plans to start construction.



Generally, before receiving final permits, you will have to pay all required fees, including those required by other agencies like school districts or water districts. The County will give you information about how to pay and obtain proof of payment for any fees required.

Permitting Fees

WAYS TO SAVE ON FEES

ADUs under 500 square feet don't need to pay school district fees. Water and sewer providers cannot charge connection fees for an ADU converted from existing space.

ADUs can be charged a variety of fees by the County, the State, and other agencies. Some fees are based on the details of the project while others are fixed. Surprisingly, the County does not control fees like school and water fees, which are assessed by other agencies and dependent on the size or location of your ADU. For more information about fees for your project and what to expect, speak with County staff.

ESTIMATING FEES The total amount of fees depends on your property and plans. Planning staff will work with you to provide an estimate once you have a good idea of your project details.

Our [Mariposa County ADU Calculator](#)  can provide an estimate of fees for your project.

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

Typical Fees

All ADUs require several fees including building permit, site plan review, environmental health plan, and inspection. **ADUs of all sizes are not charged impact fees but are subject to school district fees.**

- **BUILDING PERMIT AND PLAN REVIEW FEES** cover the costs of inspections before, during, and after construction. These fees can vary based on the project and are often a few thousand dollars.
- **OTHER DEPARTMENT FEES** (including state fees) are paid directly to the County and vary by project. Staff will let you know if any apply to your ADU during the application process.
- **UTILITY AGENCY FEES** support the cost of providing service to the community. Under state law, existing buildings do not require water fees, while new buildings can only be charged fees in proportion to the size of the ADU. See the Directory on the final pages for information on utility agencies.

Permitting Fees

- **SCHOOL DISTRICT FEES** support the schools in your area and are paid directly to them. Applies to ADUs 500 square feet or more. As of 2023, Mariposa County Unified School District fees are \$3.20 per square foot of habitable area. Staff will let you know what your fees might be and see the Directory for school district contact information.

Building Permit Fee Examples

Here are examples of construction valuations (not actual construction costs) and building permit fees from real Mariposa County ADU projects. Fees include building permit, plan check, inspection, and other typical fees invoiced by the County. These examples do not include fees that may be charged for septic, well, grading, or road encroachment.

1,200 SQUARE FOOT ADU

\$5,631 including fire sprinklers, and solar inspections

610 SQUARE FOOT ADU

\$4,701 including fire sprinklers, and solar inspections





ADU STORY

Sue, Kathy, & Barb A PERFECT PLACE FOR MOM



“ Mom loves to cook and bake so the kitchen was the most important part of the ADU, and we planned details down to where to store cookie trays. We downsized a lot, but it was fun to get creative together.”

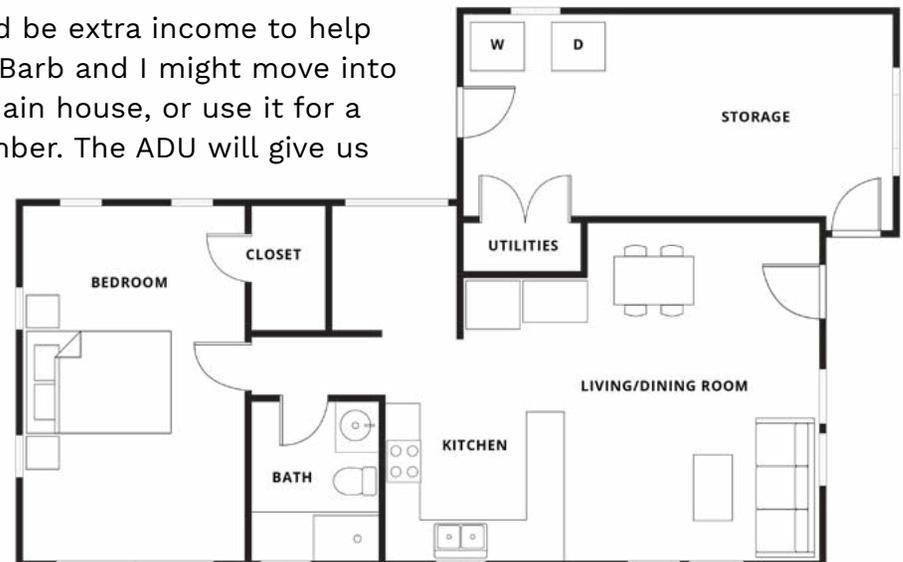
LOCATION	Grass Valley
TYPE/LAYOUT	Detached, 1 bedroom
COMPLETED	2019
TIME	12 months
SIZE	1,100 square feet

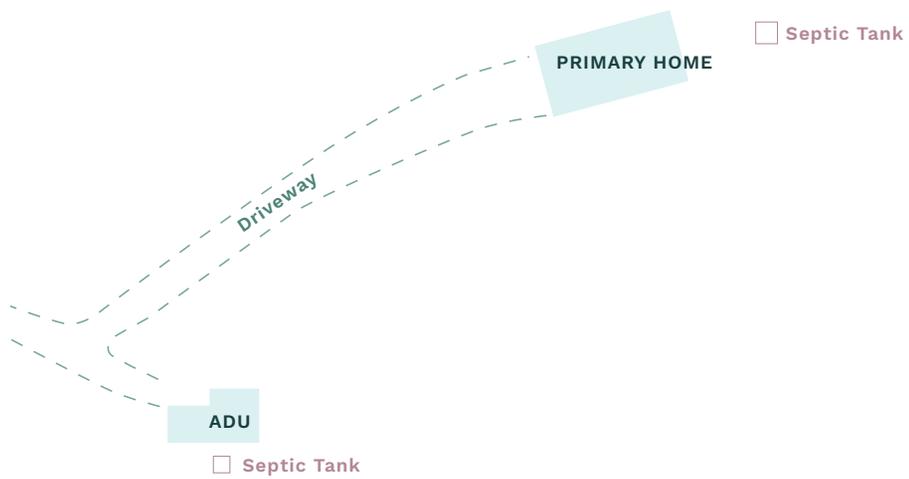
When my wife Barb and I bought this property I wanted my mom Kathy to move closer so we could care for her as she ages, and there was a small cabin here.

I thought I'd convince mom to move over the next ten years, but after a couple days of visiting she was ready! We wanted to try the ADU while we can enjoy time together, instead of when she's much older and the experience is more difficult. That's my advice: don't wait, do it now!

The cabin was a studio with electric and septic set up, so designing the ADU was easy. We sketched ideas on a napkin, then Mom refined the plans. We added a bedroom, bathroom, patio, and big windows; now Mom has better views than we do. She added personal touches like a dining nook and a craft area. The permitting process took longer than I expected, but I work for the County and see it getting easier. You need a professional that knows what they're doing, and we had a great contractor who made the process easy. Our County building inspector was also terrific. There were a few things we had to correct, but overall it was smooth sailing.

It's a blessing to have her here, and a relief as she gets older. We have our independence and privacy, but if she needs anything I'm right here. If she needs more support she can move in with us and rent the ADU, and that would be extra income to help with her care. Later on Barb and I might move into the ADU and rent the main house, or use it for a caretaker or family member. The ADU will give us flexibility throughout our whole lives. It's been wonderful for our family, and I hope we build more in our community.







ADU INSIDER PERSPECTIVE Tips on Legalizing an Unpermitted ADU

Realtors and County staff across the region work with folks every day who are considering permitting an existing ADU. Here are some things they have learned:

- 1 TALK TO LOCAL STAFF** You don't have to give an address, just a general description of your situation to learn more. You can always ask how unpermitted ADUs are handled first, since this might vary based on where you live. Some areas might have programs or resources to help you decide if it's possible too.
- 2 CONSIDER HIRING A PROFESSIONAL** Navigating regulations and permitting can be complex. Trying to do it yourself is often more expensive in the end, especially because each round of reviews costs more. A professional will know the rules and can manage the application process, saving you time and money.
- 3 BUILD A BUDGET AND BE STRATEGIC** The costs can add up quickly when legalizing an unpermitted ADU and at some point you will need to make a go/no-go decision on if it's feasible. Figure out the sequence of steps, identify what is necessary for legalization, list out expected costs, and decide how to finance it.
- 4 GATHER DOCUMENTATION** Some jurisdictions allow homeowners to use the building standards in place when the ADU was built, so figure out how you will prove the construction date. Did you save receipts? Are HVAC components dated? Does the assessor have records? Do you have a dated aerial image?
- 5 PREPARE FOR A MARATHON, NOT A SPRINT** Other issues can come up that increase time and costs, like driveway modifications or lot line adjustments with a hopefully willing neighbor. Don't let the bumps in the road stop you once you've made a 'go' decision, just take a breath and keep going.
- 6 AN UNPERMITTED ADU CAN BE MORE EXPENSIVE THAN BRINGING IT UP TO CODE** If the ADU was well built, costs are usually fees for drawing, permits, and (maybe) impact fees, plus future taxes from property value increase. The costs of NOT having a legal ADU could be a lot. Insurance companies refuse claims for unpermitted structures all the time, and fines for code violations can be heavy.



SECTION SIX

Construction



Hire Your Contractor



Monitor Construction



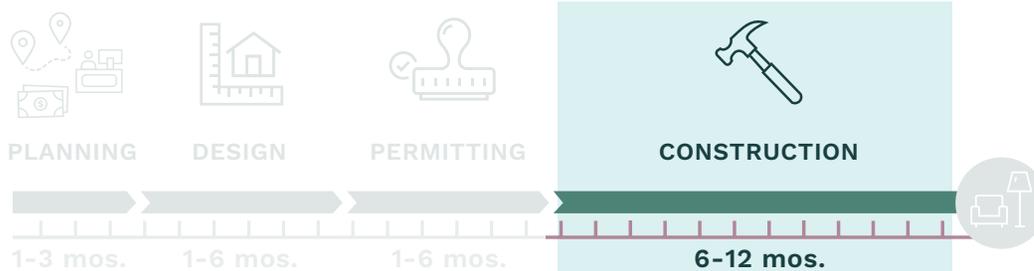
Get Inspections

PLUS:

- Building costs

Project Timeline

The Construction phase typically takes 6-12 months. Most ADU projects take 12-18 months to complete, but some extend to 24 months or more.





Hire Your Contractor

? How do I find a contractor?

Beware of unrealistically low bids! An unreputable contractor might give a low bid to get the work and then demand more money for “unforeseen circumstances.”

CONTRACTOR RESOURCES

The California Department of Consumer Affairs can help you find a contractor. They have resources on hiring, checking the license status, negotiating a clear contract, and resolving disputes. Visit their [website](#) .

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).

If you are not using a design/build firm, you will need hire a contractor for the construction phase of your ADU. They will not only complete skilled construction work, but also manage the construction process, like hiring subcontractors, coordinating construction and inspections, and troubleshooting delays and changes.

Being Your Own General Contractor

Often, people who are their own general contractors have a difficult time. Building an ADU is more like building an entire home than a renovation – there are many opportunities to make costly or time-consuming mistakes. Having an expert manage contract negotiation, payment schedules, quality checks, project timing, and working with the County and other agencies can be incredibly valuable. While it may cost more up front, you might save a lot of money by reducing delays and change orders, and get your ADU rented sooner too.

Getting Bids

Start with getting bids for your construction drawings. Ask your designer and community for recommendations of good local professionals and make a list of candidates. It’s great if they have ADU experience, but it’s not necessary.

Be specific about what is and is not included in the bid. Also ask for license, insurance information, references, work examples, and a proposed schedule.

You’ll want at least three bids for comparison. Make sure you understand all the details of the bids and ask all necessary clarifying questions. Your designer may be able to help you compare bids and select your contractor.

Generally, there is a trade-off between experience and cost; less expensive contractors will have less experience, while those with more experience may charge more. Check their references and ask to see photographs of past projects. Also consider their communication style, if you think you’ll work well together, and whether they understand your goals.

Due Diligence

Before you hire your contractor, make sure to check their license and insurance. You can verify their license by calling the Contractors' State License Board at 800-321-2752 or checking their [website](#). You can verify insurance by requesting a certification of insurance or by calling their insurance agent. Make sure workers' compensation, property damage, and liability are included.

The Contract

Your contractor will most likely present you with a contract to formalize your agreement. Review the entire agreement carefully to make sure you understand it and are okay with everything. Also, make sure you understand how added work will be handled and what additional budget you might have to respond to needed changes. The contract should address the following:

- Contractor's license number, name, and address
- Total project cost and payment schedule
- Start date and timeline
- List of work to be accomplished and materials to be used
- Work to be subcontracted to other professionals like plumbing or electrical (if any)

- Specific terms about what constitutes substantial completion of work and a final walkthrough checklist
- Special requests (saving scrap lumber, bricks, or homeowner "sweat equity" and provided materials)
- The terms of warranties
- Whether there is a cancellation penalty
- A provision requiring the contractor to obtain lien releases from all subcontractors and suppliers (to protect the homeowner if a subcontractor claims they weren't paid)
- Plan for cleanup and removal of material and debris
- Requirements for protecting property and landscaping
- Storage areas for materials
- Instructions regarding children or pets
- Costs that are not covered (exclusions)

The payment schedule should be a dated plan that shows when you will make payments based on construction completion milestones. For example, you might pay 20% after the building enclosure is complete, 25% once the exterior finish carpentry is complete, etc. California law requires that no more than 10% or \$1,000 be paid up front, whichever is less. If a contractor asks for more, it is a red flag. Also, it's generally a good practice to withhold 10% of the total project cost until all work and inspections are completed.

EXAMPLE BUILDER PAYMENT SCHEDULE



10%	UPFRONT Or \$1,000, whichever is less (CA law)
20%	SITE PREPARED
20%	FOUNDATION COMPLETE
20%	ENCLOSURE COMPLETE
20%	EXTERIOR FINISHES COMPLETE
10%	WORK & INSPECTIONS COMPLETE



Do not sign the contract until you fully understand and agree with all the terms. If you are unsure, you can always contact an attorney to review it before you sign.



Monitor Construction

Once your contract is signed, your contractor will start work according to the schedule you agreed upon.

Your contractor will lead the construction process, you will have the following responsibilities:

COMMUNICATE Keep in touch with your contractor and schedule regular check-ins.

MONITOR Regularly walk through the construction area to monitor the quality of the work and make sure the work is progressing the way you expect.

DECIDE Be prepared to make decisions about the details—light fixtures, appliances, and other materials—in a timely manner so your contractor can stay on schedule.

ADJUST Follow the contract you agreed to, including any changes as described specifically in a change order form.

INSPECT Although your contractor will usually arrange the required inspections, it is your responsibility as the property owner to make sure that the inspections are conducted as required at each stage of the construction process.

Traditional construction will take 6-12 months, though this varies heavily.

Stages of construction include:

- Site preparation 1-2 months
- Foundation 1 month
- Walls, roof, doors 1-2 months
- Plumbing & electrical 1-2 months
- Insulation & drywall ½-1 month
- Fixtures & finishes 1-2 months
- Final touches ½-2 months

Any changes to the original agreement should be reflected in a change order form that is signed by both you and the contractor and that describes the specific change and any corresponding adjustment to the price or timeline. Beware that some changes (size, height) require County review.

It's a good idea to have your designer involved as construction begins. Your contractor may have questions and can also suggest construction cost savings related to the design. Your designer may also (for an extra fee) stay on board to consult on last-minute substitutions that might arise.



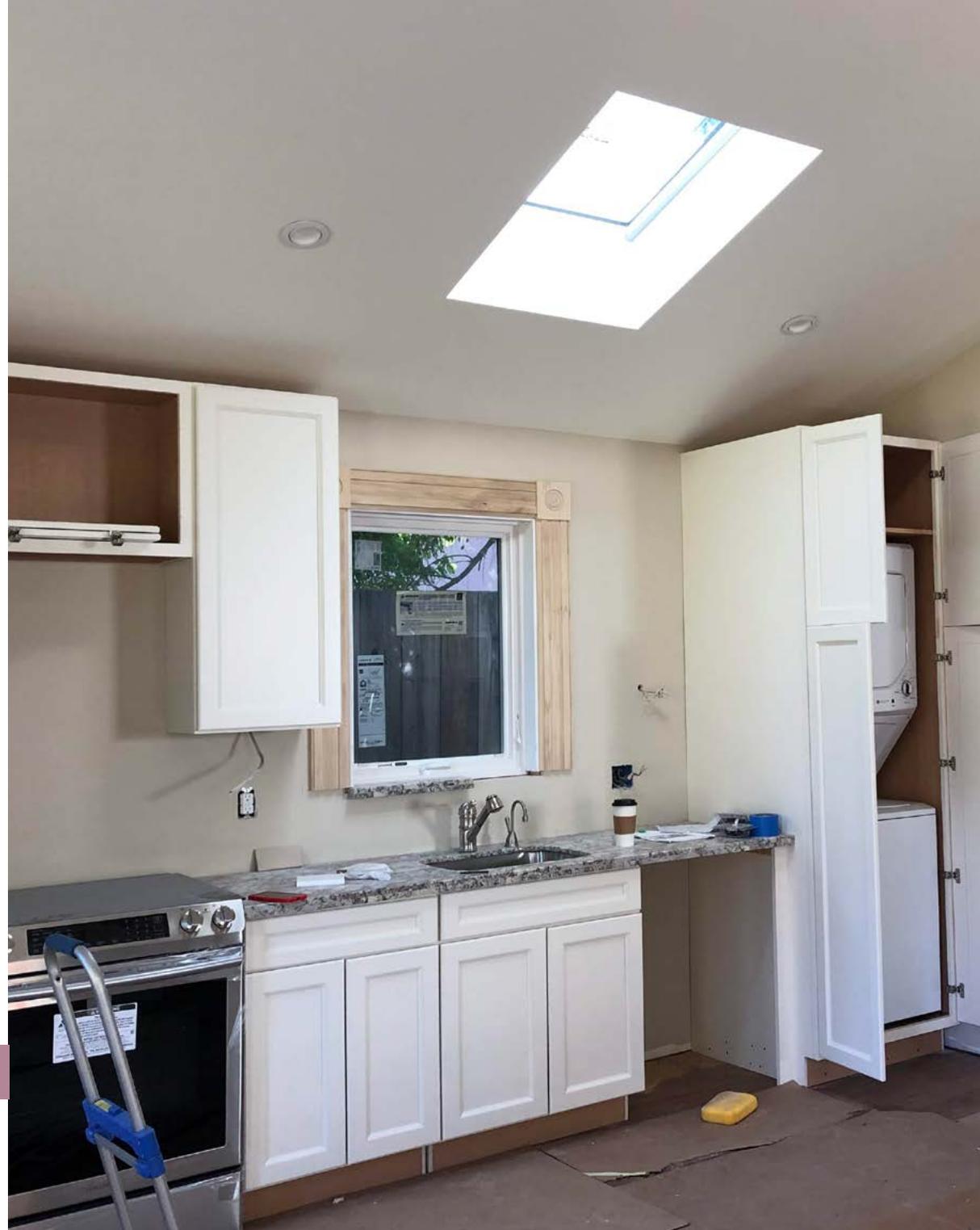
Get Inspections

During construction, your ADU will be inspected multiple times to ensure it is being built according to the permitted plans (typical inspections include foundations/footings, framing, electrical/plumbing, and exterior finishes). The County inspects local areas on a rotating schedule. Contact the Building Department for more detailed information.

You will also need to schedule inspections with other agencies if required for your project. In addition to the Building Department, this can also include Public Works, Public Health, County Fire, CALFIRE, and the Mariposa County Public Utility District. Mariposa County inspects local areas on a rotating schedule—contact the Building Department for more detailed information.

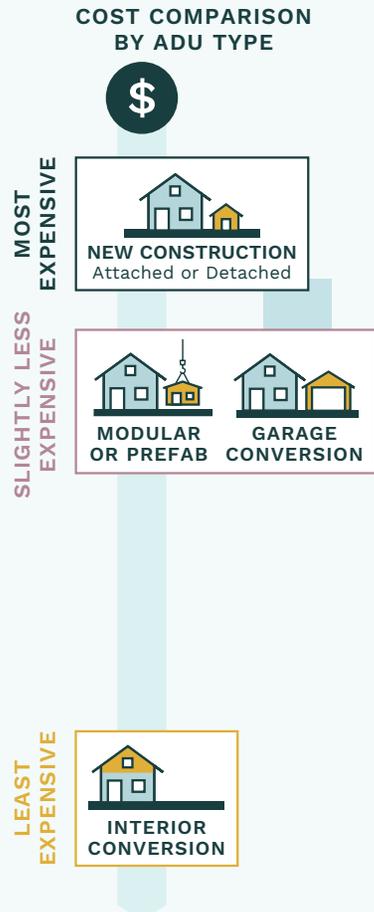
After your final inspection is approved, the inspector will provide final sign-off on your building permit (known as a certificate of occupancy) and then your ADU is ready for move-in!

 **SEE ALL URLS** in the Directory (final pages).



Construction (Hard) Costs

Placing all your plumbing, such as kitchen and bathroom pipes in the same wall, especially on multiple floors, will save you money during construction.



ADU construction costs vary significantly depending on materials, site conditions, location, and other factors.

The construction or hard costs for an ADU typically ranges from \$30,000 for a simple interior conversion JADU to \$400,000+ for a large detached ADU with high-end finishes on a hillside lot. Cost per square foot is a good way to estimate – but this can range from \$150-300 per square foot depending on your project. \$200 per square foot is a good estimate of construction costs for an average project. For total cost (hard and soft) see the Budgeting & Finance section.

Despite what many think, smaller ADUs may cost almost the same as larger ones because construction costs are not directly related to size. Many costs like foundation, kitchen, and bathroom work only increase slightly for larger ADUs. Kitchen costs will range from \$25,000–\$50,000 with each bathroom ranging from \$15,000–\$25,000.

WORRIED ABOUT HIGH CONSTRUCTION COSTS? If the cost to build an ADU is too high, consider converting interior space. A JADU is often much less costly than other ADUs and can be a great option.

- **CONVERSIONS OF INTERIOR SPACE** (basement or otherwise) are often the cheapest, as long as there aren't complex codes or structural issues.
- **GARAGE CONVERSIONS** are not much cheaper than new construction (if at all) because they usually need significant work to meet code and the shell of a building (walls, foundation, roof) are not the most expensive parts of construction. Common expenses/challenges include: redoing the foundation, replacing the floor to add a vapor barrier, and replacing the windows and insulation.
- **NEW CONSTRUCTION ADUS** tend to be the most expensive.

There are many other factors that will impact costs, including:

- Quality of interior finishes and amenities
- Architectural form and details
- Extent of required utility, structural, mechanical, electrical, and plumbing upgrades
- Required site upgrades (sidewalks, sewer, and water)
- Whether sprinklers are required
- Whether doors and windows meet emergency exit standards
- Lot complexity (slope, trees, fault lines, etc.)



BONUS SECTION

Move-In & Renting

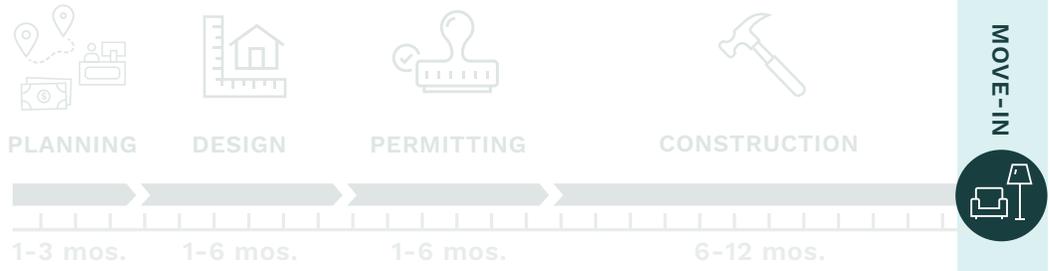


Construction is complete, and now it's time for someone to move in!

This could be you, a friend, a family member, or a tenant. There are a lot of benefits to having someone else on the property – added security, extra income, sharing tasks and maintenance – but there are also a lot of responsibilities. You'll need to learn about housing laws, find and manage a tenant, and properly maintain the ADU and property. You'll need to approach both sides thoughtfully.

It's very important to understand the laws because they can impact your abilities in the future, from increasing rent to evicting tenants. The following steps will help you understand and prepare for the responsibilities of being a landlord.

Project Timeline





What is involved in being a landlord?



SEE ALL URLS in the Directory (final pages).



COMPLETE PRELIMINARY STEPS

Prepare to rent your ADU by confirming your homeowners insurance is set up adequately, setting up utilities, and developing a plan to handle the finances.

You'll also need to confirm your ADU's address and what you'll need for mail service. The County will have assigned you a new address during the permitting process (but you can always check in with them if you're unsure).



UNDERSTAND RENTAL LAWS

You will need to understand all the laws related to being a landlord, especially around discrimination. For an overview of California laws, review [California Tenants: A Guide to Residential Tenants' and Landlords' Rights and Responsibilities](#), published by the CA Department of Consumer Affairs. If you are unsure, you can always contact an attorney.



SET THE RENT Maximizing the rent is often not the only consideration – setting a fair rent a bit under market rate will help you attract and keep good tenants. **Consider pricing your ADU so that it is affordable** for the local workforce and families who may not be able to afford high rents. Housing is considered affordable if a household is paying less than one third of their income on their rent.

Many homeowners are motivated to rent their ADU affordably to community members because they serve essential roles in our neighborhoods and often have difficulty finding housing that meets their needs. If you financed your construction with a loan, consider the loan length, interest rate, and any reserve funds you have as well.



FIND A TENANT

Research how to successfully advertise your ADU and select a good tenant. Along with word of mouth, you can also contact nearby schools, faith communities, or other similar locations to see if any teachers, staff, or community members are looking for housing. You can also post a rental listing on Craigslist or Zillow, share your listing with Facebook or Nextdoor group pages about housing in your area, and advertise with the Yosemite National Park daily email report for employees.



WRITE YOUR LEASE

You will need to create a lease (or rental agreement if renting month-to-month) for both you and the tenant to sign. This agreement should clearly identify all the expectations for you and your future tenant. Once you select a



EXERCISES

- IDENTIFYING WHAT YOU WANT IN A LEASE Plan important decisions about your lease terms.

SEE FINAL PAGES OR USE QR CODE



tenant, you should collect a security deposit and first month's rent when you sign the lease. There are also companies that will perform a simple background check on a tenant for a fee. Conducting a move-in inspection with your tenant is also a good idea. Even if you are renting to a friend or family member, creating an agreement is always a good idea to avoid possible confusion or conflict. Sample agreements can be found online. Many realtors can also help you set up a lease or rental agreement.



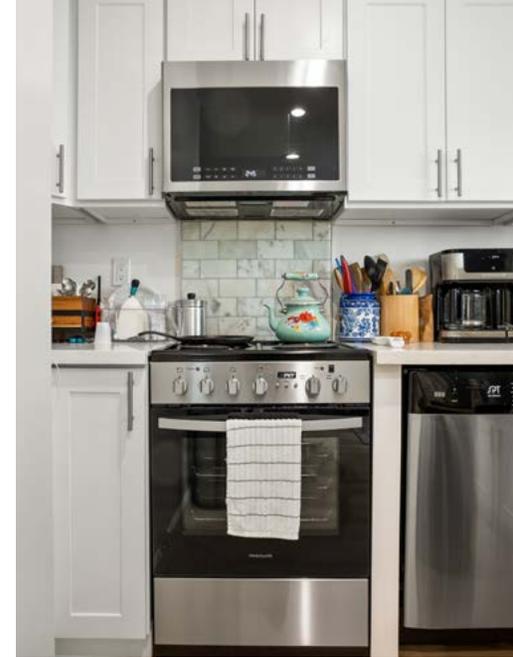
MANAGE YOUR RENTAL Think about a long-term plan for the care and upkeep of your ADU, how to split shared responsibilities, and how to address any issues that might occur with your tenant.

Maintenance According to state law, it is your responsibility as a landlord to maintain a “habitable” ADU. Regardless, it is best practice to keep your ADU well-maintained and to keep your tenant happy. Except in the case of an emergency, you will need to give your tenant(s) 24 hours’ notice before you or any maintenance people can enter.

Rent increases Generally, if your tenant has signed a lease, you cannot increase the rent during the lease term. When the lease expires (or in month-to-month tenancies), you can increase the rent as you see fit.

Beginning in January of 2020, the Tenant Protections Act now provides rent cap protections for qualified rental housing in California (see details in [California Tenants Guide](#) )

Eviction Hopefully you and your tenant(s) will not have problems, but if problems do arise that cannot be resolved, you will need to consider eviction. It’s recommended that you work with a lawyer if eviction is necessary. State law mandates a judicial eviction process, which is best handled by a lawyer.



MARIPOSA COUNTY LANDLORD PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM (LPP) provides resources and financial support for landlords who rent to families receiving federal rental assistance through Housing Choice Vouchers and other housing-related programs run by Mariposa County and Health and Human Services (HHSA). See the [Landlord Partnership Website](#)  and the Directory for more information. Landlords who participate in LPP may be eligible for:

- Cash Rental Bonus and Lease Renewal Bonus
- Renter Pre-screening – Case managers screen and provide renter education regarding the expectations and responsibilities to maintain productive rental relationships.
- Rental Inspections and Cleaning – Case managers facilitate cleaning and inspections after rental vacancy.
- Vacancy Rent Loss Prevention – HHSA covers rent costs while the required paperwork is being completed.
- Landlord Liaison – Health and Human Services specialist will assist in answering landlord’s questions between landlords and renters.
- Problem Prevention – The case manager’s regular in-home visits handle potential problems early.
- Satisfaction from supporting your community by helping our vulnerable neighbors.



ADU STORY

Rosemary CONFIDENCE FROM EXTRA INCOME



“ The rental income gives us flexibility, and I have more confidence in my finances and my family’s long term stability.

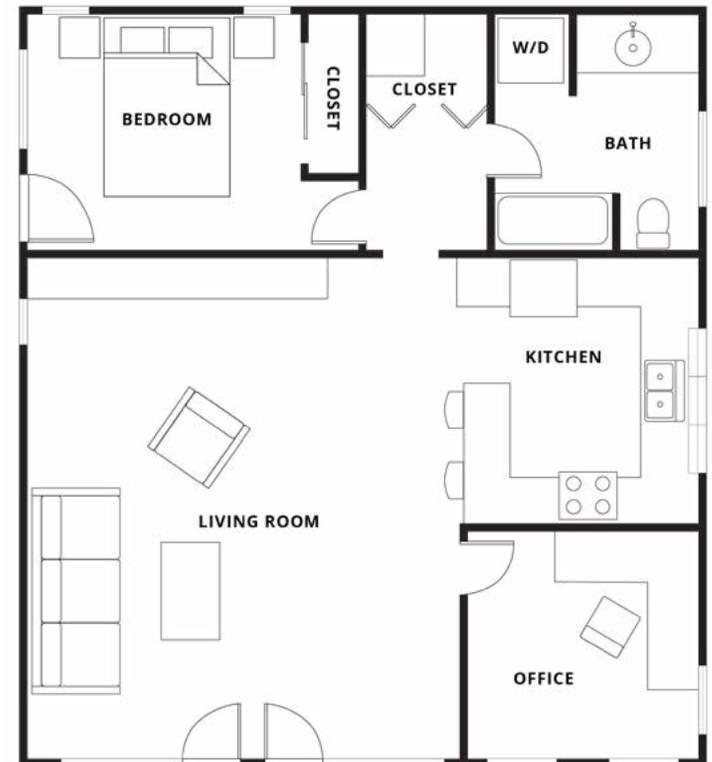
LOCATION	Nevada City
TYPE/LAYOUT	Detached, 1 bedroom
PRICE	\$175,000
COMPLETED	2022
TIME	2 years
SIZE	1000 square feet

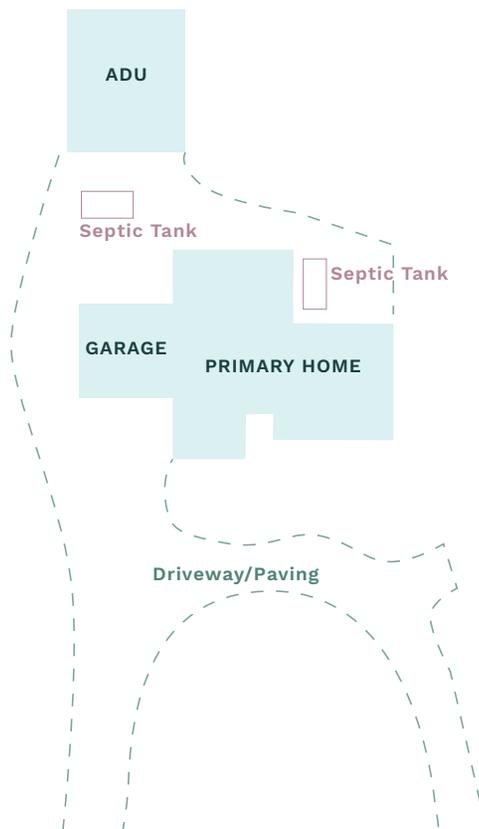
My family has been in this area for generations. They owned a jewelry store in Grass Valley during the Gold Rush, and when my mom and aunt visited to learn about our history, they fell in love. My parents, aunt, and cousins moved here in 2000. My dad writes a weekly column in the local newspaper, and my mom opened a family restaurant. I was raised a city girl, but Nevada City has given me the space to relax and be closer to my parents.

I bought my house to have somewhere for my parents to stay as they age. There was a detached garage that I wanted to convert to an ADU. It seemed like a great investment to have a space that we could use for anything from a guest house to a rental unit. Making this 1960s garage habitable was a lot of work. It was important to find a contractor that was qualified and I worked well with. We did a lot of problem solving throughout the process, like soil testing for a septic system, sealing gaps in the roof, and preparing for a heavy snow load in the winter.

I helped with a lot of tasks that were intimidating to start but really interesting to learn, like running electrical and installing insulation. We worked hard to make the ADU feel open and light.

During the pandemic my parents moved into the main house and started renting out the ADU. I’m a single parent and a teacher, so any extra income is helpful. The rental income gives flexibility, and I have more confidence in my finances and my family’s long term stability. My advice is to go ahead and make the investment. Building an ADU can add up, but the contribution to your financial situation and your community is worth it.





ADU Exercises

These exercises are also available as a separate PDF at motherlodeadu.org/guidebook.

Contents

- Identifying Goals & Concerns
- Recording Your ADU Goals
- Making a Rough Sketch of Your Property
- Property Details Worksheet
- Staff Meeting Worksheet
- Budgeting Exercise
- Initial Design Exercise
- Design Ideas Exercise
- Designer Considerations Exercise
- Identifying What You Want in a Lease



Identifying Goals & Concerns

	Goals	Short-term	Long-term	Concerns	Short-term	Long-term
	Rental income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Housing for a family member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hiring/managing contractors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Helping out the community (e.g., housing a teacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Housing for someone with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site constraints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Planning for retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Challenges of renting and managing the ADU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Increased resale value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict with neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Downsizing/moving into the ADU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting approval/scrutiny from government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Housing domestic help (e.g., an au pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Help with chores or to watch over things when you are away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Housing an in-home caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			



Recording Your ADU Goals

To stay motivated through challenges in the process, some people find it helpful to write down what building their ADU will allow them to do. Use this space to express your goals – consider cutting it out and putting it somewhere you'll see it regularly. Examples: "Take the kids to Disneyland every year." "Make sure my mom has a safe place to live."

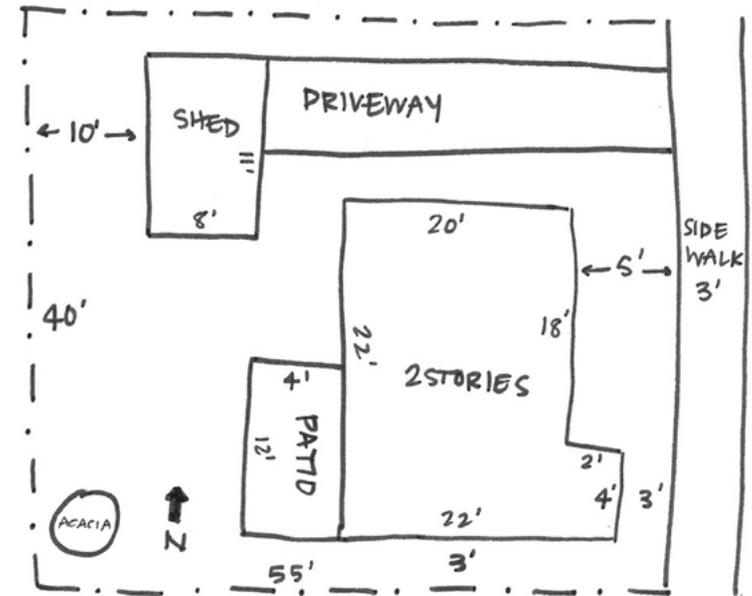


Making a Rough Sketch of Your Property

Drawing a site plan is an essential step, both for your own planning and to get permit approvals. A site plan shows your property line and key information such as buildings, setbacks, lot line, etc. Most homeowners hire a professional to produce the final version, but it is often helpful to have a rough sketch to start. At this stage, you are going to draw major elements like building footprints, driveways, trees, etc.

1. Start by sketching out your property lines, measuring and marking them accordingly. (You can use fences to estimate property lines, but at some point you may need to get a professional surveyor on-site.) Add any existing structures. Focus on the basic shape. You don't need to worry about inside floor plans, you just need to capture the footprint and whether it is one or two stories. Note special features like porches, trellises, and exterior stairways.
2. Next, add in the driveway. Be sure to measure the length and width of the driveway. Pay attention to other significant features like pools, trees, steep slopes, etc. When you are done, you will have something that looks like the sketch to the right.
3. Now, try doing a drawing to scale. Depending on your lot size, a good scale might be one inch equals ten feet. If possible, try to have your north arrow direction pointing upwards on the page. Besides drawing the lines, be sure to make notes about the exact length as well. Be sure to use a pencil.
4. Make a copy. You'll want to copy your site plan or take a photo with your phone, because you will probably end up drawing on it several times as you explore ideas.

Example:



Eventually, the site plan needs to be drawn to scale, but to start you should use scratch paper.

If the site plan is feeling too stressful, you can skip it for now or go outside and do a really rough sketch on a napkin. It's better to meet with County staff earlier than to get everything right.

Note: Each 4x4 square on the following page equals 1."

Property Details Worksheet

You will need to gather important information about your property. Use the instructions on the Learn the Rules page of our website* or in your County's ADU Guidebook** and review when you meet with Planning staff.

Use the resources mentioned to find the following information about your property:

- Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) (this is also listed on your property tax bill)
- Zoning District
- Lot Size (may also be listed on your deed)
- Size of your main home, including the Floor Area (the square footage of the ground footprint of your house) and building height
- Any Special Zoning Districts, such as a Historic District, High Fire Hazard Area, Heavy Snow Load Area, Park Area, or other special zoning. You may need to ask County staff directly about whether your property is within a special zoning area

Notes:

Development Standards for your Property

These rules dictate where and how much you can build on your property based on your zone. **It can feel empowering to know this, but you don't have to** – your design team and County staff can confirm.

See the Learn the Rules section of the Mother Lode ADU website* or your County's ADU Guidebook** for more details about development standards. In general, you will want to look for the following regulations:

Setbacks, including distance between a structure and the front, side, and rear property lines

Height limit

Lot coverage, or how much of the property can be covered by a structure, usually listed as a percentage

* motherlodeadu.org/learn-the-rules ** motherlodeadu.org/guidebook



Staff Meeting Worksheet

One of the best things you can do is to talk to County staff early in the process. See the Contact page of the Mother Lode ADU website* or the Directory pages of your County's ADU Guidebook** for contact information. Many of these questions are addressed in the Guidebook, but you can take this opportunity to clarify anything unique to your property.

QUESTIONS FOR PLANNING

- 1. Does my property fall in any special zones that may impact what I can build? (Historic Districts, Fire Hazard Zone, etc.)**
- 2. Will I need to add parking? Does my home meet parking requirements?**
- 3. What are the setbacks, height, and site coverage, or other development standards for my property?**
- 4. What potential problems do you see with my property or project plans and how can I address these?**
- 5. Is a deed restriction required? When do I do that?**
- 6. Are there any regulations on vacation rentals or short-term guest quarters?**
- 7. Are there restrictions on how I can use my ADU?**
- 8. Can you summarize any other rules that are important?**

QUESTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

1. Are there any soil testing requirements for my property?
2. Are there any special septic or well requirements for my property?

QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING

1. How long does permitting take? When should I check in if I haven't heard anything? How do I do that?
2. Can you explain all the fees I'll be expected to pay as part of permitting?
3. Are there common pitfalls or mistakes to watch out for in the design, application, or construction process?
4. Do you have official record of my existing floor area? What areas should I count when determining existing size?
5. Are there fire safety or sprinkler regulations I should know?
6. When should I start talking to utility companies about requirements?



Budgeting Exercise

These questions will help you think through and get started with financial planning for your ADU. See the Budgeting & Finance section in your County's Guidebook* for more information.

- 1. What are your estimated construction costs? Use the Mother Lode ADU calculator.****
- 2. How are you planning to finance your ADU?**
- 3. How much cash, savings or other liquid assets can you put into the project?**
- 4. Do you have any friends and/or family that you may be able to ask for a loan?**
- 5. How much equity (the portion of your home's value you own outright) do you have in my home? market value of home – remaining mortgage balance = equity**
- 6. Do you want to consider applying for a loan from a lender?**

* motherlodeadu.org/guidebook ** motherlodeadu.org/calculator

CONTINUED

7. Will your income support a loan?

12. What do you expect to rent my ADU for? This will be a source of loan repayment. Estimate projected rent with the Mother Lode ADU Calculator.*

8. Do you expect to qualify for a loan?

13. If a family member or friend is going to live there, can they contribute by paying rent?

9. Do you prefer a bank, credit union, or mortgage broker?

14. Is your priority to maximize income or to help meet the housing needs of the community?

10. What banks, credit unions and/or mortgage brokers do you want to reach out to? Include your current lender.

15. What other financial considerations do you have and/or what ideas do you want to explore?

11. Which loan(s) best suit your situation?



Design Exercise

Here are some notes and questions to get you started on the design process. Remember, all of these might change when you start discussing costs. Review the goals you identified in previous exercise(s) to ensure they are still appropriate. See the Design section of the Mother Lode ADU website* or your County's ADU Guidebook** for more information.

- 1. What type of ADU do you want?** e.g., detached, conversion, etc. See ADU 101 in the Guidebook.
- 2. If you belong to a Homeowners Association, do they have design guidelines you'll need to follow?**
- 3. Do you want a modern or traditional feel?**
- 4. What are some houses that you like and why?**
- 5. Are there floor plans you like/don't like? What features stand out?** See our Floorplans Gallery*** for examples.
- 6. Are there features in your current or past homes that you loved or felt could be improved that can inspire your ADU?**
- 7. How many bedrooms do you want? How many bathrooms do you want, and do you want them larger or smaller?**
- 8. Do you want more communal space (living room) or larger bedrooms?**

* motherlodeadu.org/design ** motherlodeadu.org/guidebook *** motherlodeadu.org/floorplans

CONTINUED

9. What kind of kitchen do you want (chef's kitchen or something less expensive)?

10. Will there be a washer and dryer in the unit?

11. Do you want features that will help people stay in the home as they age or that account for special needs? e.g., level entry, accessible bathrooms, grab bars, no stairs, etc.

12. Do you want additional green or sustainable features?

13. Are there landscaping plans you would like to incorporate?

14. Do you have preferences about the flow of the house? Such as: entrance should be here, a door to the garden, etc.

15. How should you situate your ADU on your property? Think about natural light, access to utilities, and privacy (for both the primary residence and the neighbors).

16. Do you want to create outdoor space adjacent to the ADU? Are there trees or features to protect?



Ideas Exercise

Write down your initial thoughts here.
When it's time to make decisions about these elements, pull this out.

Flooring

Lighting

Siding

Fixtures



Design Consideration Exercise

Before you start looking for a designer, consider what you want. See the Design section of your County's ADU Guidebook* for more guidance.

Adapted from the American Institute of Architects

- 1. Would you rather work with a licensed architect, who has more training, or a designer, who will likely be less expensive?**
- 2. Do you want to use modular/prefab construction (partially built off-site)?**
- 3. Do you want to use a design/build firm to handle drawings and construction?**
- 4. How client-centered do you want your designer to be? Homeowners may be actively involved or hands-off; designers may welcome interaction or hate it.**
- 5. Do you prefer to work with a larger firm or a smaller firm?** Both have pros and cons. In the end it comes down to your personal preference.
- 6. Do you want your designer to just prepare drawings, or do you want them also to help with permitting, construction drawings, and/or the construction phase?**

* motherlodeadu.org/guidebook



Identifying What You Want in a Lease

Use this space for decisions about your lease terms. See the Move-In section in your County's Guidebook* for more info.

1. **What is the rent?**
2. **When is rent due and how will it be paid?**
3. **What is the security deposit?*****
4. **Is your lease fixed-term or month-to-month?**
5. **At the end of the rental period, does the lease terminate or turn into a month-to-month rental?**
6. **Does the unit include parking?**
7. **Do you allow pets? If so, what type? How many? Size restrictions? Will you ask for a pet deposit?**
8. **Does the rent include utilities such as water, electrical, trash, and/or gas?**
9. **Do you allow tobacco or cannabis use?**
10. **Do tenants have access to any shared spaces (yard, storage, etc.) and, if so, what are the terms?**
11. **Are you limiting the number of tenants?*****
12. **Is there anything else will you include in your lease?**

* motherlodeadu.org/guidebook

** As of September 2019, California law says you may charge up to two months' rent or three months' rent if the unit is furnished.

*** Landlords can generally limit the number of tenants and state law has found the two-plus-one formula (two people per bedroom plus one person) as reasonable but subject to rebuttal based on local factors like size of the bedrooms, configuration of the residence, age of the children, and local laws.

PLANNING TERMS

ASSESSOR'S PARCEL/IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (APN/AIN)

Every lot in California is assigned a unique APN/AIN, used to identify your property.

BUILDING CODE Standards ensuring buildings are built safely, established by the State and often amended by cities. Building codes include sections like plumbing, electrical, etc.

DEED RESTRICTIONS Conditions or rules that are added to a deed for a house.

FIRE-RESISTENT/FIRE-RATED WALLS AND FLOORS

Walls and floors designed to restrict fire spread, sometimes required for walls and floors shared between main house and ADU.

LOT COVERAGE The area of a property allowed to have buildings on it, often expressed as a percentage of the lot. Zoning code specifies if there is a maximum lot coverage for your lot.

LOT SIZE Total square footage of the property.

MIXED-USE ZONING allows multiple uses on a lot, like commercial and residential together.

OWNER OCCUPANCY A requirement that homeowners live on the property.

SETBACKS The minimum distance a building must be located from property lines. A four foot side setback means buildings must be at least four feet from the side property line.

SINGLE-FAMILY / MULTIFAMILY Single-family zoning means one home on a property. Multifamily zoning means more than one home located on a property (e.g., apartments).

ZONING/ZONING CODE Standards saying what can be built on a site, including rules about building height and others. Each lot is assigned to a zone. Your property may also be in a "special zone" or "overlay zone" that sets

extra rules – like Historic District, Fire Hazard Area, Park Area, etc.

PERMITS

BUILDING PERMIT An official document confirming your project meets local code. This permit allows you to start construction.

PLAN REVIEW/PLAN CHECK Multiple County departments reviewing your plans for code compliance and flagging safety or other issues.

PUBLIC HEARINGS A public meeting where elected officials and the public can comment on a proposed project; uncommon for ADUs.

SOIL INSPECTIONS A report by a county inspector or private professional showing the soil on your property meets safety rules.

WATER/SEPTIC INSPECTION AND/OR CALCULATIONS

A report by a county inspector or private professional showing the water and/or septic system on your property meets capacity and safety requirements.

DESIGN & CONSTRUCTION

SEE MORE IN THE DESIGN SECTION

CONCEPTUAL/SCHEMATIC DRAWINGS Initial drawings of your site and proposed structure, including floorplan and other structures and outside features (e.g., trees).

CONSTRUCTION DRAWINGS Drawings with all details needed for construction, in order to get a bid from a contractor or to start building.

DRAFTER Someone who does architectural drawings.

ELEVATION DRAWING A drawing that shows a straight-on view, usually of an exterior wall.

INSPECTIONS A visit from trained professionals to ensure your structure is being built according to your permit application.

REFINED DRAWINGS Refined drawings of your site and proposed structure, including doors, windows, fixtures, and other detailed features.

SURVEY A professional examination/drawing of your property, including boundaries.

FINANCING & FEES

HARD COSTS The direct costs of construction.

SOFT COSTS Non-construction costs: design services, permitting fees, and others.

DEPARTMENTAL FEES including Building Permit, Plan Check, Environmental Health Review, and Public Works Review, among others cover the costs of processing and inspections. These fees can vary and are often a few thousand dollars. You may have varying departmental fees based on where your property is located.

DEED RESTRICTION FILING FEES cover County recording of your deed restriction.

IMPACT FEES help pay for infrastructure and services in your community and are often the largest fees charged for ADUs. They cannot be charged for ADUs under 750 square feet.

FIRE DISTRICT FEES support your local fire district and cover the cost of maintaining fire safety in your area. These fees may be paid directly to the fire District or to the County depending on where your property is located.

SCHOOL DISTRICT FEES support schools through a per square foot development fee. Fees are paid directly to the school district and cannot be charged for ADUs under 500 square feet.

UTILITY FEES vary by the size and location of your ADU. Under state law, existing buildings do not require water fees, while new buildings can only be charged fees in proportion to the size of the ADU.

Directory

Mariposa County

5100 Bullion Street, Mariposa, CA 95338

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

mariposacounty.org/80/Planning

209-966-5151

planningdept@mariposacounty.org

Mon-Fri 8am-5pm

BUILDING DEPARTMENT

mariposacounty.org/67/Building

209-966-3934

building@mariposacounty.org

Mon-Fri 7am-4pm

Application forms, handouts, resources

mariposacounty.org/134/Application-Forms

ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH DIVISION

mariposacounty.org/235/Environmental-Health

209-966-2220 or 888-777-0377

eh@mariposacounty.org

Mon-Fri 8am-5pm

COUNTY PROPERTY SEARCH TOOL

mariposacounty.org/823/Maps-Property-Information

ASSESSOR & RECORDER'S OFFICE

mariposacounty.org/64/Assessor-Recorder

209-966-2332

assessor@mariposacounty.org,

recorder@mariposacounty.org

4982 10th Street, P.O. Box 35

Mariposa, CA 95338

Mon-Fri 8am-5pm

(Recording 8am-3:30pm)

HISTORIC SITES & RECORDS PRESERVATION COMMISSION

mariposacounty.org/454/Historic-Sites-Records-Preservation

WILDFIRE RISK & PREPAREDNESS

Office of the State Fire Marshal's Fire

Severity Zone Map [osfm.fire.ca.gov/](http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/fire-hazard-severity-zones-maps-2022)

fire-hazard-severity-zones-maps-2022

Cal Fire Hazard Severity Zone Tool

calfire-forestry.maps.arcgis.com/apps/webappviewer/index.html?id=988d431a42b242b29d89597ab693d008

Cal Fire State Responsibility Area Viewer

bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/state-responsibility-area-viewer

Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Homeowners Checklist

readyforwildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/Homeowners-Checklist.pdf

Cal Fire Disaster Ready Guide

cafiresafecouncil.org/resources/fire-safety-information-for-residents

Board of Forestry Code

bof.fire.ca.gov/regulations

SCHOOL DISTRICT

Bass Lake School District

basslakeschooldistrict.com

Mariposa County Unified School District

mcusd.org

Fees mcusd.org/District/Department/21-Superintendent/Portal/developer-fees

UTILITIES: ELECTRICITY & GAS

Pacific Gas and Electric 800-743-5000
pge.com

UTILITIES: WATER & SANITATION

County Environmental Health Division

Wastewater & Septic: mariposacounty.org/378/Septic-SystemsLiquid-Waste

Well Systems: mariposacounty.org/382/Water-Wells

Public Utilities Several areas have public utility systems—check with staff to confirm.

Town of Mariposa is likely Mariposa Public

Utility District (MPUD) mariposapud.org

UTILITIES: TRASH & RECYCLING

Total Waste Systems mariposacounty.org/232/Solid-Waste-Recycling

CONTRACTORS & DESIGNERS

Mother Lode ADU Contractor List

Professionals who work on ADUs in our

area. motherlodeadu.org/contractors

Informational resource only. Read the Hire

Your Team part of the Design section and

do research before hiring.

American Inst. of Architects, Sierra Valley

List of local designers. aiasv.org/directory

CA Contractors' State License Board Info on

finding a contractor and verifying a license.

800-321-2752, cslb.ca.gov/consumers

Directory

FINANCE RESOURCES

Mariposa County ADU Calculator Online tool for estimating ADU costs and potential income. motherlodeadu.org/calculator

Cal HFA ADU Grant Program ADU financing for low-income and moderate-income homeowners. calhfa.ca.gov/adu

California Association of Mortgage Brokers Info on finding a loan provider, including banks and mortgage brokers. californiamortgageassociation.org

CA Depts. of Real Estate and Corporations Tools for verifying mortgage broker licenses. www2.dre.ca.gov/PublicASP/pplinfo.asp

RESOURCES FOR NEW LANDLORDS

The Mariposa County Landlord Partnership Program (LPP) provides resources and financial support to landlords who rent to low-income families. landlordpartnership@mariposacounty.org
mariposacounty.org/2532/Landlord-Partnership-Program

California Tenants: A Guide to Residential Tenants' and Landlords' Rights and Responsibilities State of CA primer for both landlords and tenants. courts.ca.gov/documents/California-Tenants-Guide.pdf

OVERALL ADU GUIDANCE

Casita Coalition Resources, case studies, and more resources for small homes in California. casitacoalition.org

URL Directory

INSIDE COVER

ADU website motherlodeadu.org
Planning mariposacounty.org/80/Planning

ADU 101

Can I Build motherlodeadu.org/can-i-build
ADU website motherlodeadu.org

PROCESS-AT-A-GLANCE

ADU website motherlodeadu.org
Can I Build motherlodeadu.org/can-i-build
ADU exercises motherlodeadu.org/guidebook
Calculator motherlodeadu.org/calculator
County Property Search Tool assr.parcelquest.com/Home
County ADU Rules motherlodeadu.org/rules
Plans Gallery motherlodeadu.org/plans
Building permit application mariposacounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/6201/Residential-Application?bidId=
ADU checklist motherlodeadu.org/checklist

GETTING STARTED

Stories motherlodeadu.org/stories
Floorplans motherlodeadu.org/floorplans
Plans Gallery motherlodeadu.org/plans
Calculator motherlodeadu.org/calculator

LEARNING THE RULES

County ADU Rules motherlodeadu.org/rules
Mariposa Property Search tool mariposacounty.org/823/Maps-Property-Information
Can I Build motherlodeadu.org/can-i-build
Historic Sites mariposacounty.org/454/Historic-Sites-Records-Preservation

Fire Severity Zone Map osfm.fire.ca.gov/fire-hazard-severity-zones-maps-2022
Cal-Fire SRA Viewer bof.fire.ca.gov/projects-and-programs/state-responsibility-area-viewer/
Homeowners checklist readyforwildfire.org/wp-content/uploads/Homeowners-Checklist.pdf
Disaster Ready Guide cafiresafecouncil.org/resources/fire-safety-information-for-residents/
Board of Forestry Code bof.fire.ca.gov/regulations
County ADU Rules motherlodeadu.org/rules
PG&E pge.com/en_US/residential/customer-service/home-services/renovating-and-building/understanding-the-application-process/understanding-the-application-process.page
PG&E Building and Renovation pge.com/en_US/small-medium-business/building-and-property/building-and-maintenance/building-and-renovation.page

BUDGETING

Calculator motherlodeadu.org/calculator
CalHFA website calhfa.ca.gov/adu
Finance Guide casitacoalition.org/guidebooks-for-homeowners
CA Association of Mortgage Brokers californiamortgageassociation.org
CA Depts of Real Estate and Corporations www2.dre.ca.gov/PublicASP/pplinfo.asp
Assessor mariposacounty.org/64/Assessor-Recorder

Directory

DESIGN

ADU website motherlodeadu.org
Plans Gallery motherlodeadu.org/plans
Contractors motherlodeadu.org/contractor
AIA directory aiasv.org
County ADU Rules motherlodeadu.org/rules
Floorplans motherlodeadu.org/floorplans

PERMITTING

ADU checklist motherlodeadu.org/checklist
Historic Sites [mariposacounty.org/454/
Historic-Sites-Records-Preservation](https://mariposacounty.org/454/Historic-Sites-Records-Preservation)
County Building [mariposacounty.org/134/
Application-Forms](https://mariposacounty.org/134/Application-Forms)
Calculator motherlodeadu.org/calculator

CONSTRUCTION

CA Dept. of Consumer Affairs/Contractors
License Board cslb.ca.gov/consumers

MOVE-IN/RENTING

California Tenants Guide [courts.ca.gov/
documents/California-Tenants-Guide.pdf](https://courts.ca.gov/documents/California-Tenants-Guide.pdf)
Landlord Partnership [mariposacounty.
org/2532/Landlord-Partnership-Program](https://mariposacounty.org/2532/Landlord-Partnership-Program)

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Ben Goger: Project Manager, Mariposa Co.

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Jaclyn Taylor: Project Team, Calaveras Co.



Photo Sources

PHOTO: HUMBOLDT ADU

ABODU Prefab ADUs, abodu.com

ADAM LONG Photography

ADU MARIN

ADU resources, adumarin.org

BUILDING AN ADU

ADU resources, buildinganadu.com

CARI DESIGNS Architect Cari Jelen,
cari-designs.com

HUMBOLDT ADU

ADU resources, humboldtadu.org

MCDUNN ADUS

ADU builder, mcdunnadus.com

NAPA SONOMA ADU ADU resources,
napasonomaadu.org

NEW AVENUE HOMES

Design/Build, newavenuehomes.com

PROPEL STUDIO ARCHITECTURE

Architect, propelstudio.com

**SAN MATEO COUNTY SECOND UNIT
CENTER** ADU resources,
secondunitcentersmc.org

SKYLINE HOMES

Prefab ADUs, skylinehomes.com

SMALLWORKS DESIGN/BUILD

Design/Build, smallworks.ca

TIMBRE ARCHITECTURE DESIGN

Architect, timbre-architecture.com

UPLAND ADU

ADU resources, uplandadu.org

VALLEY HOME DEVELOPMENT

Design/Build,
valleyhomedevlopment.com

VILLA HOMES

Design/Build, villahomes.com

Ready to build your dream ADU?



MOTHER LODE ADU

**SEE ALL OUR RESOURCES AT
[MOTHERLODEADU.ORG](https://motherlotheadu.org)**