



Accessory Dwelling Unit

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

UPDATED: 2.22.21

What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (a.k.a. ADU, secondary unit, granny flat, in-law unit)?

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU), also known as a secondary unit, in-law unit, or granny flat, is an attached or detached residential dwelling unit that provides a complete independent living space with its own cooking and sanitation facilities and is accessory to an existing or proposed single-family residence.

What are the different types of ADUs?

There are many ways to build ADUs. The Town of Truckee uses the following three categories to define ADUs:

Detached ADU

A living unit that is physically separated from the main house and its attached garage, not sharing a common wall or other conditioned space, including:

- A new detached structure to create an independent living unit.
- Converting an existing detached accessory structure, such as a garage, workshop, office, or art studio room, into a separate living unit.
- A residential addition to an existing detached structure, such as adding a separate living space above or adjacent to an existing detached garage.

Attached ADU

A separate living unit that is within or connected/attached to an existing or proposed primary house or its attached garage, having a wall and/or other conditioned space in common, including:

- Converting an existing non-living space (e.g., storage area, attached garage, attic, crawl space) into a living unit.
- Remodeling an existing permitted living space within the main house to create a separate living unit.
- Adding square footage (an addition) to the primary home, for example, adding a second story or extending the main floor to create a living unit.

Junior ADU (JADU)

A dwelling unit that is no more than 500 square feet and is within or attached to the living space of an existing or proposed primary residence. A JADU must include a cooking facility with appliances and may include separate sanitation facilities or share sanitation facilities with the attached main residence.

Where are ADUs allowed?

ADUs are allowed on properties in the Town of Truckee that are zoned to allow single-family or multifamily residences, subject to compliance with the applicable development standards.

Are ADUs allowed in my Homeowners' Association (HOA)?

Yes. In accordance with California legislation, ADUs are allowed on all residentially zoned properties, including those within HOAs. The Town strongly encourages homeowners to check with individual HOAs to see if specific rules apply.

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For more information, please visit: [TownofTruckee.com/government/housing](https://www.townoftruckee.com/government/housing)

What if I have a septic system?

If your property is on a septic system (i.e., onsite wastewater system), you should first contact the Nevada County Environmental Health Department (NCEHD) to determine whether your property can accommodate an ADU and the requirements for your property. You will need to apply to NCEHD concurrently with your Town of Truckee building permit. If the ADU space is a conversion of an existing, permitted bedroom, there is potential that NCEHD might not need an application submittal, but please reach out to NCEHD first regardless at (530) 265-1222 or env.health@co.nevada.ca.us.

How many ADUs can I have on my property?

On a lot with an existing or proposed single-family dwelling, one ADU **and** one Junior ADU can be permitted. On lots with existing multifamily dwellings, up to two detached ADUs and at least one attached, converted ADU may be permitted. Please contact the Truckee Planning Division to determine how an ADU might work on your property.

What is the maximum size of an ADU?

Standard ADUs:

- *Maximum Floor Area:* In general, the maximum gross floor area for an attached or detached ADU is as follows:
 - For parcels under 1 acre in size, and all multifamily parcels, the maximum gross floor area of an ADU shall not exceed the following:
 - 850 square feet* for an efficiency unit, studio or 1-bedroom ADU.
 - 1,000 square feet* for an ADU with two or more bedrooms.
 - For parcels of 1 acre or more, the maximum gross floor area of an ADU shall not exceed 1,200 square feet*, regardless of the number of bedrooms within the unit.

**The actual gross floor area of a standard ADU may be limited to less than these maximum sizes based on the application of the setbacks, height limits, and general development standards. For example, a 2-bedroom ADU may be limited to 900 square feet in order to comply with the maximum allowable site coverage on the property*

- *Setbacks & Height:* An ADU that is 16 feet in height or less from natural grade may be constructed with reduced setbacks, as close as 4 feet to side and/or rear property lines, including eaves; however, special standards apply to roof designs and architectural projections. Any portion of an ADU structure over 16 feet in height must comply with standard side and rear setbacks and height limits applicable to the main dwelling.

Smaller ADUs: An ADU that has both a maximum gross floor area of 800 square feet **and** a maximum height of 16 feet:

- 1) Can be constructed with reduced setbacks, as close as 4 feet to the side and/or rear lot lines, including eaves; however, special standards apply to roof designs and architectural projections.
- 2) Can deviate from the site coverage, floor area ratio, and open space development standards for the property; however, any deviation(s) shall be the minimum necessary to accommodate the ADU.

Converted ADUs: An existing portion of a main dwelling, garage, or accessory structure is permitted to be converted to or replaced with an ADU with special setbacks, sizes, and standards. Please check the ADU Development Code for more details.

JADUs: A JADU cannot exceed 500 square feet of gross floor area.

What is an average size for an ADU?

In considering options to create an ADU on your property, you may be wondering how much space is appropriate to allocate to an ADU. While we don't currently have information on average unit sizes for ADUs, below are the average sizes of new apartments constructed in 2018 in the United States:

- Studio: 514 SF
- 1 bedroom ADU: 757 SF
- 2 bedroom ADU: 1,138 SF

(Source: Yardi Matrix, as referenced by RENTCafe at <https://www.rentcafe.com/blog/rental-market/real-estate-news/us-average-apartment-size-trends-downward/>)



For more information, please visit: TownofTruckee.com/government/housing

What are parking requirements for ADUs?

One parking space is required for a new, detached ADU, along with the two spaces required for the primary home. Attached ADUs and JADUs, however, do not require additional parking. There are several exceptions to the standard parking requirements, including ADUs within a half-mile walking distance to a public transit stop, ADUs located within the designated Downtown Specific Plan Area, and/or ADUs attached to an existing structure on the property. ADUs created from a converted garage or carport do not need to replace parking for the main dwelling. Please reference the ADU Section of the Development Code for more details.

Click here to review the map of properties in Truckee that are exempt from ADU parking requirements based on their location within a half-mile distance of public transit stops, as referenced above:

<https://townoftruckee.maps.arcgis.com/apps/View/index.html?appid=4a2089bc409c4339a5dfb17d98d0143d>

Reminder: On-street parking is prohibited throughout Truckee from November 1 to April 30 annually. We encourage owners to consider realistic parking needs/options even if the ADU is exempt from Town parking requirements.

Are there other ADU standards I should know about?

For a complete list of all development standards for ADUs, refer to Town of Truckee Development Code Section 18.58.025 (Accessory Dwelling Units); however, these are some highlights:

- Proximity: A detached ADU must be within 100 feet of the main dwelling.
- Driveway: An ADU/JADU must be served by the same driveway encroachment as the main dwelling unit, with some exceptions for corner lots, through lots, and lots wider than 150 feet that meet specific standards.
- ADU Entrance: An ADU/JADU must have an exterior entrance *separate* from the main entrance to the proposed or existing single-family dwelling. In addition, the ADU/JADU and main dwelling may share an entryway/mudroom that is up to 80 square feet and that provides direct, private access to each unit.
- ADU Kitchens: An ADU must include a permanent kitchen with at least: 1) Cooking facilities (i.e., standalone cooking appliance with at least two burners that is connected to a gas stub or 220 electric volt outlet), 2) a refrigerator, and 3) a sink for dishwashing and sanitation purposes.
 - JADUs are not required to include a "permanent" cooking facility per State legislation and may simply be equipped with portable cooking appliances (e.g., microwave, hot plate), a food preparation counter, and storage cabinets.

Truckee Development Code for ADUs: <https://www.townoftruckee.com/government/housing/accessory-dwelling-units>

What are the ADU rules for modular units and tiny homes on wheels?

A manufactured home, modular home, tiny home, or park model home placed on a permanent foundation may be used as an ADU if it is permanently attached to a foundation and complies with the California Building Standards Code, as adopted by the Town of Truckee. A tiny home on a chassis or park model home on a chassis is not permitted for use as an ADU unless it is modified to meet the aforementioned standards. A recreational vehicle (e.g., motorhome, campervan, truck camper, travel trailer, pop-up trailer, fifth wheel trailer, toy hauler), travel van, or other movable habitable space generally cannot be approved as an ADU.

Can I subdivide my property and sell the ADU?

No, ADUs are not allowed to be sold as separate units from the main dwelling.

Can I use my ADU or JADU as a short-term rental?

No. The short-term rental of an ADU or JADU for a term of less than 31 consecutive nights is prohibited in the Town of Truckee. For more information about the Town's Short-Term Rental Rules:

<https://www.townoftruckee.com/government/short-term-rental-program>

The only allowance to short-term rent an ADU (not JADUs) is if the ADU meets the following requirement:

A legal building permit from the Town of Truckee or Nevada County specifically identifying the space as an independent living unit (e.g., ADU, secondary residential unit, granny flat, independent apartment) issued prior to January 1, 2020.



Is a permit required for a new ADU?

Yes, a building permit is required in all cases. If you are interested in creating an ADU on your property we encourage you to contact Town staff prior to preparing construction documents to discuss your concept and verify what permits/documents will be needed. Fee waivers and other incentives are available for ADUs under 750 s.f. (see below for details)

How do I get a permit for an existing, unpermitted ADU?

The Town has a process in place to review permit applications for existing, unpermitted ADUs. The permit process is called an "After-the-Fact Permit," and information can be found here:

<https://www.townoftruckee.com/home/showdocument?id=14777>

The Town will be offering incentives, grants and loans, for a period of two years, starting January 1, 2021 for homeowners permitting previously unpermitted ADU.

For more information go to the Incentives section of the ADU page on the Town Housing website.

How long does it take the Town to process an ADU building permit?

Per the recent State ADU laws, the Town will process the ADU or JADU application within 60 calendar days from the date that the completed application is received. If corrections are required, a new 60-day timeframe will begin from the resubmittal date. If the Town has not acted upon the completed application within 60 days, the application shall be deemed approved. If the ADU/JADU permit application is submitted in conjunction with a new single-family dwelling permit, the above listed ADU permit timeline does not apply. Typically, the review times are much less than 60 days, however, 60 days is the maximum amount of time it would take.

Are ADUs required to install fire sprinklers?

ADUs are not required to provide fire sprinklers if they are not required for the primary residence. Fire sprinkler requirements within the Town limits are administered by the Town building department per California Residential Code (CR R313.2)

Are ADUs required to install a solar system?

A photovoltaic system is only required if you are proposing a newly constructed detached structure.

For more information including a FAQ go to: <https://www.townoftruckee.com/government/community-development/building-and-safety/residential/project-scope/solar>

Is the Town offering any incentives to build or permit existing ADUs?

Yes, the Town currently has the following ADU incentives:

In Place:

- **Fee waiver:** For ADUs under 750 square feet, development impact fees shall be waived, per State legislation, by the Town of Truckee, Truckee Fire District, Tahoe Truckee Unified School District, Truckee Donner Recreation, and utility/sewer districts (Truckee Donner Public Utility District, Truckee Sanitation District, Tahoe-Truckee Sanitation Agency). All other permitting and connection fees still apply.
- **Development Standard Deviations:** For ADUs 800 square feet or less and no more than 16 feet in height, there are several flexible code variances offered including reduced set back and coverage requirements. See the Municipal Code for more details.
- **Technical Assistance:** The Town has an ADU Team in place to assist with questions about your project prior to submitting your building permit application. To set up an appointment, Contact housing@townoftruckee.com for more info.

In the Works:

- Loan and grant products for construction of new units as well permitting existing units.
- Contact housing@townoftruckee.com for more info.



For more information, please visit: [TownofTruckee.com/government/housing](https://www.townoftruckee.com/government/housing)

Will my property tax increase if I build an ADU?

Yes, adding an ADU to your property does add value and, therefore, may increase your property tax rates. Property taxes are not assessed or collected by the Town of Truckee. Please contact the Nevada County Assessor's office to determine how property taxes may be affected by the addition of an ADU to the property.

Nevada County Assessor's Office: <https://www.mynevadacounty.com/163/Assessor> or (530) 265-1232

Do I need to obtain a separate address for an ADU?

The process for assigning an address to an ADU is initiated when the applicant picks up their issued building permit. The Planning Division is notified that the permit has been issued and will assign an address in accordance with our uniform system for addressing. The ADU will be assigned the same five-digit number and street address used for the primary home, followed by "Unit 2" as the standard format (example: 12345 Main Street, Unit 2, Truckee, CA, 96161). Once an address is assigned in our system, Town staff will send a notification to an electronic mailing list of local agencies and utility providers so that they may update their own records accordingly. A copy of this notification is also sent to the building permit applicant.

For more about the
Town of Truckee ADU Program go to:
<https://www.townoftruckee.com/government/housing/accessory-dwelling-units>

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