

ADU QUICK GUIDE — UNINCORPORATED CHAFFEE COUNTY (RR ZONING)

Read this first-

County rules set the floor; your subdivision's covenants and Architectural Committee (ARC) may add stricter limits. Always compare County code to your parcel's covenants before you plan or permit. (chaffeecounty.org)

What's generally allowed

- ADUs are allowed in Rural Residential (RR) under the current Land Use Code (effective Jan 1, 2025). See the County LUC for official language and any updates. (chaffeecounty.org)
- Maximum ADU size in RR: the smaller of 1,500 sq ft or the principal home's floor area (Table 2.3.3.4). Confirm details with Planning. (chaffeecounty.org)
- How ADUs count toward density: check the 2025 LUC; counting can vary by utilities (well/OWTS vs. public). Planning can confirm how your lot is treated. (chaffeecounty.org)

Utilities and services.

- Water: most rural parcels use a private well. Keep augmentation paperwork with your permits (Upper Arkansas Water Conservancy District serves much of the valley). ([Upper Arkansas Water District](https://upperarkansaswaterdistrict.org))
- Septic (OWTS): if the ADU adds bedrooms/flow, a licensed pro must evaluate capacity and submit any required OWTS application/resize to the County. ([Revize](https://revize.com), chaffeecounty.org)

Short Term Rentals (STR)

- County STR licensing applies in unincorporated areas, but **it does not override private covenants**. If your subdivision prohibits STRs, you cannot short-term rent there even if the County licenses STRs elsewhere. See Resolution 2024-79, which expressly states it “does not supersede... private covenants... prohibiting short-term rental units.”
- City/Town rules (Salida, Buena Vista) are different from County rules—check local ordinances if you're inside municipal limits. ([Salida, CO](https://salida.co), buenavistaco.gov)

Permitting Snapshot

1. Verify zoning and read your covenants/ARC rules alongside the County LUC. (chaffeecounty.org)
2. Call County Planning to confirm your ADU size cap and any density/accounting nuances for your lot. (chaffeecounty.org)
3. Prepare a basic site plan; apply for building permits with the Building Department. (chaffeecounty.org)
4. If on well/OWTS, have a licensed pro confirm septic capacity and submit any OWTS paperwork. ([Revize](https://revize.com))
5. Keep well permit/logs and any augmentation certificate handy for submittals. Use the State's Well Permits search to look up nearby wells. ([Colorado Division of Water Resources](https://colorado.gov))
6. If you intend to STR (and covenants allow it), review the County STR program requirements before you apply.

This handout is a quick reference for unincorporated Chaffee County. It's not legal advice and isn't a substitute for the Chaffee County Land Use Code, County permits, or your subdivision covenants/ARC rules. Always verify with the County Community Planning & Natural Resources Department and compare with your covenants before proceeding; standards can change via “glitch bill” amendments. (chaffeecounty.org)