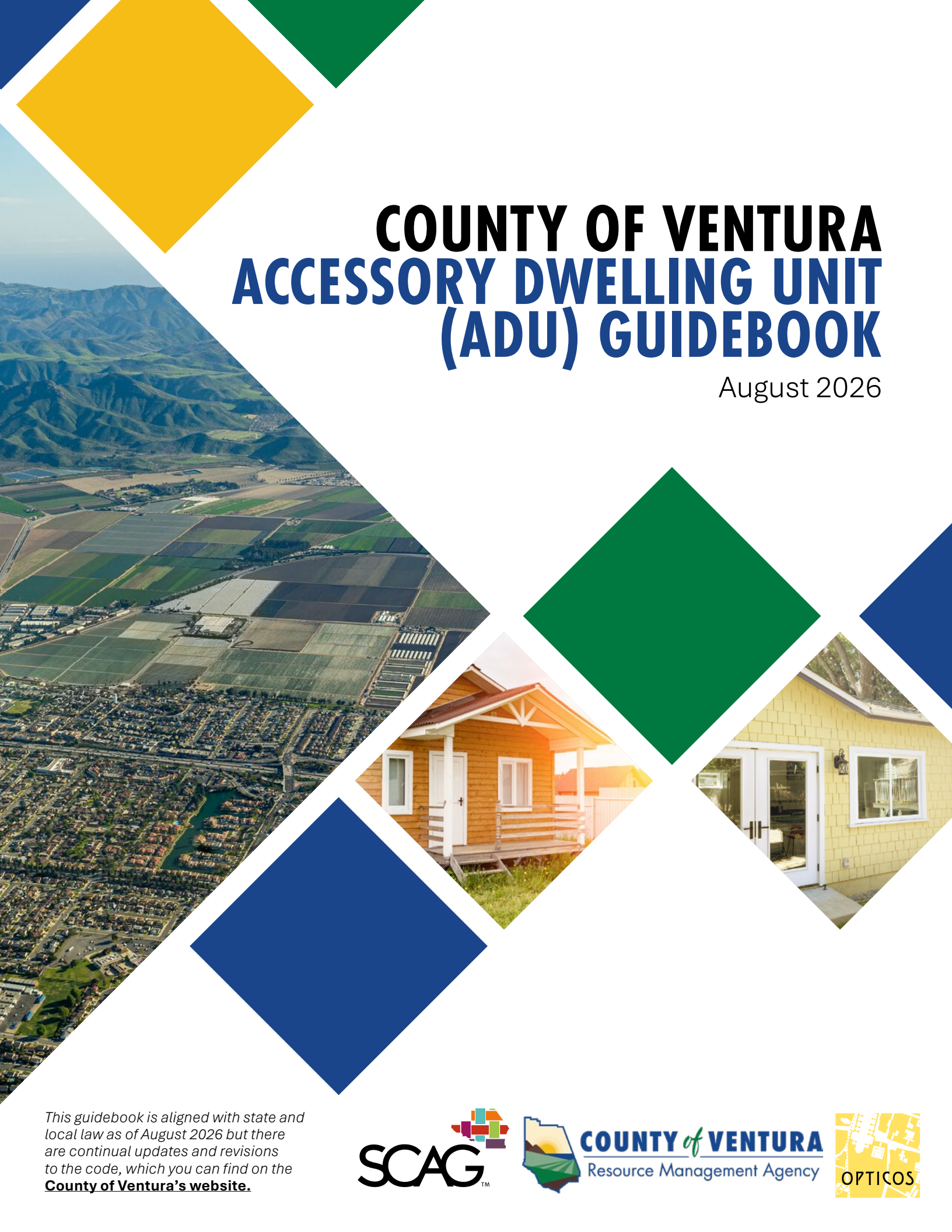


COUNTY OF VENTURA ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) GUIDEBOOK

August 2026



*This guidebook is aligned with state and local law as of August 2026 but there are continual updates and revisions to the code, which you can find on the **County of Ventura's website.***



COUNTY of VENTURA
Resource Management Agency



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PART A: ADU BASICS



ADU Basics

A GUIDEBOOK ON ALL THINGS ADU

Note: The Guidebook includes content from Coastal Zoning Ordinance ADU amendments pending certification and approval from Housing and Community Development and Coastal Commission as of August 2026.

Interested in adding an ADU or JADU to your property but not sure where to start?
Follow along to find out how to do it!

This County of Ventura ADU Guidebook aims to empower homeowners located in unincorporated County areas to add ADU(s) to their properties. It was made possible through partnership with the Ventura Council of Governments (VCOG) and Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG). The content is focused on properties in non-rural areas with access to water and sewer to incentivize development of infill areas.

Click or scan the following QR codes to access other County of Ventura ADU resources that complement this guidebook:



**County of
Ventura ADU
Website**



**Frequently
Asked
Questions**

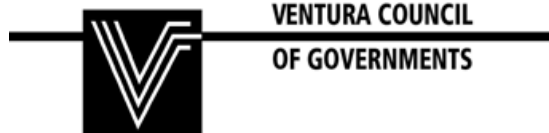


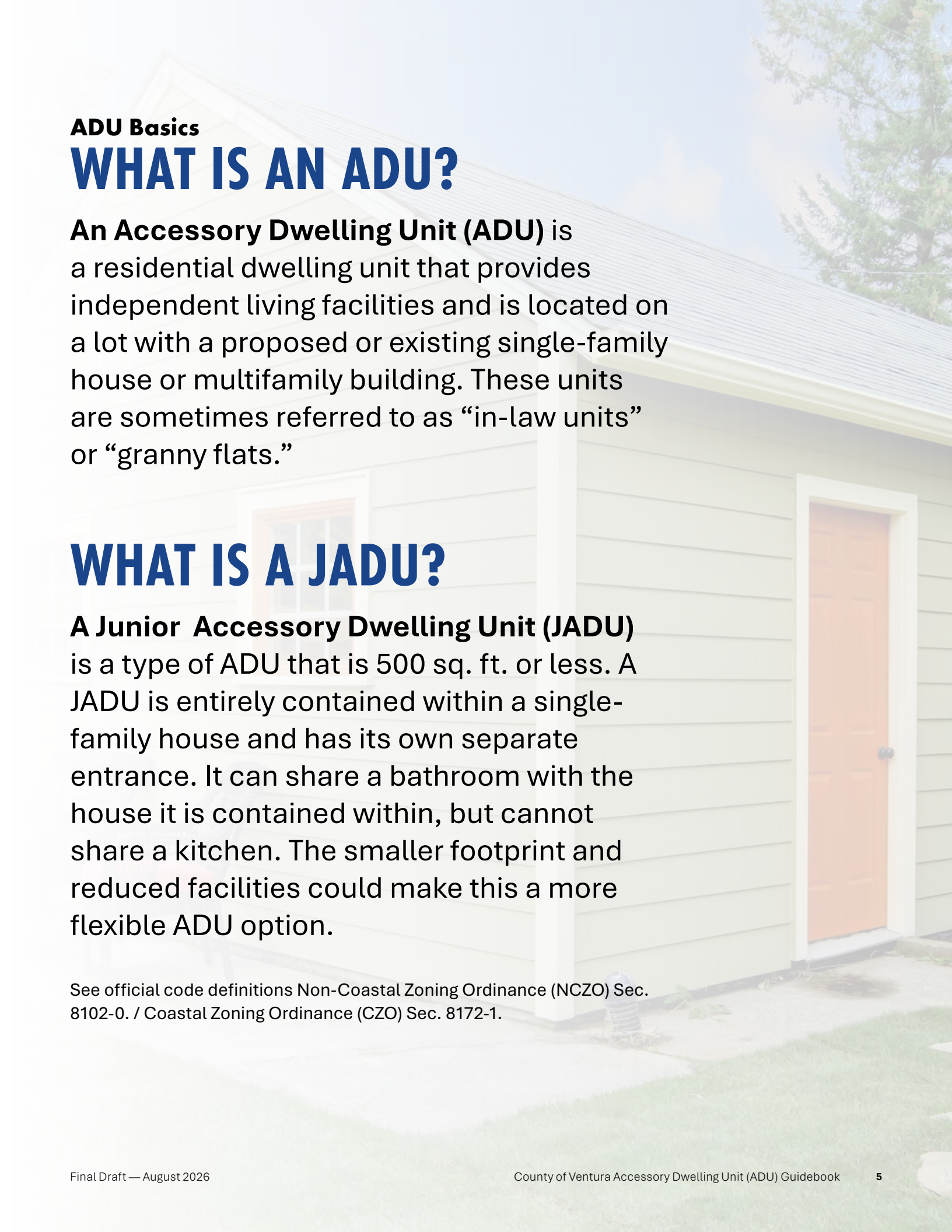
**Homeowner's
ADU Checklist**



**Standardized
ADU Plans**

The contents of this report reflect the views of the author who is responsible for the facts and accuracy of the data presented herein. The contents do not necessarily reflect the official views or policies of VCOG, SCAG, County of Ventura, or the State of California. This report does not constitute a standard, specification or regulation. This guidebook is intended as a brief summary of County of Ventura-specific requirements for unincorporated land. Accessory Dwelling Units are governed by state law and local law found in the County of Ventura zoning ordinances. In the event of any omission or inconsistency in the guidebook, state and local law will govern.





ADU Basics

WHAT IS AN ADU?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a residential dwelling unit that provides independent living facilities and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing single-family house or multifamily building. These units are sometimes referred to as “in-law units” or “granny flats.”

WHAT IS A JADU?

A Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) is a type of ADU that is 500 sq. ft. or less. A JADU is entirely contained within a single-family house and has its own separate entrance. It can share a bathroom with the house it is contained within, but cannot share a kitchen. The smaller footprint and reduced facilities could make this a more flexible ADU option.

See official code definitions Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NCZO) Sec. 8102-0. / Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO) Sec. 8172-1.

ADU Basics

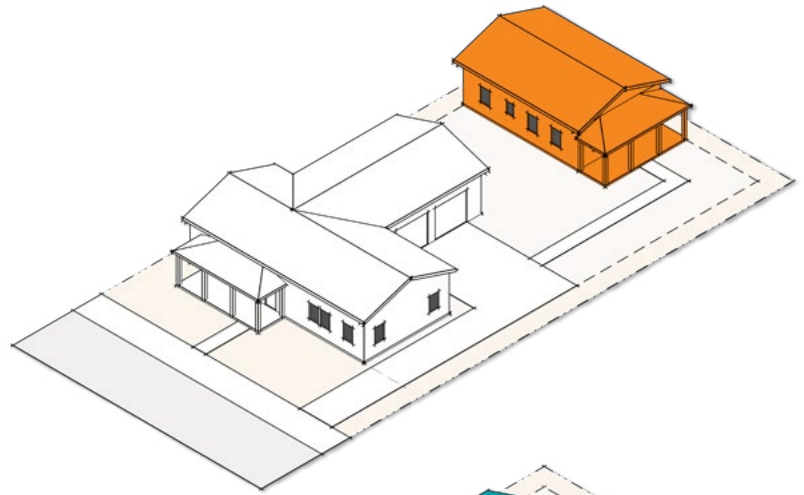
WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ADUS?

Throughout this guidebook, we'll refer to five different types of ADUs. Each of these may have distinct characteristics and applicable standards.

1

Detached ADU

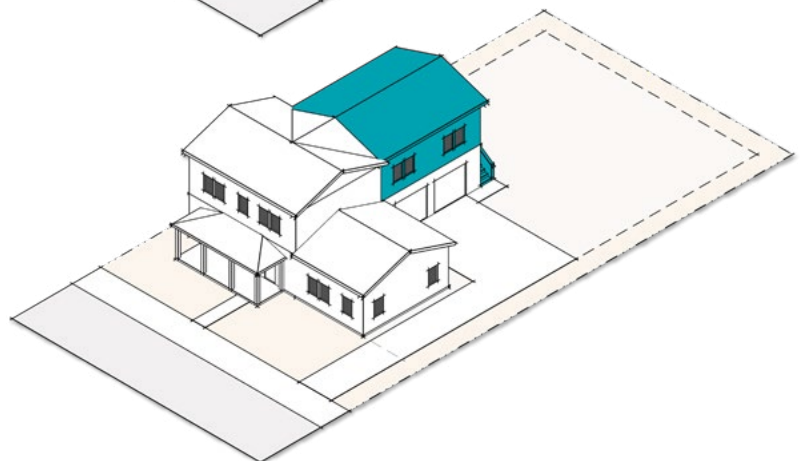
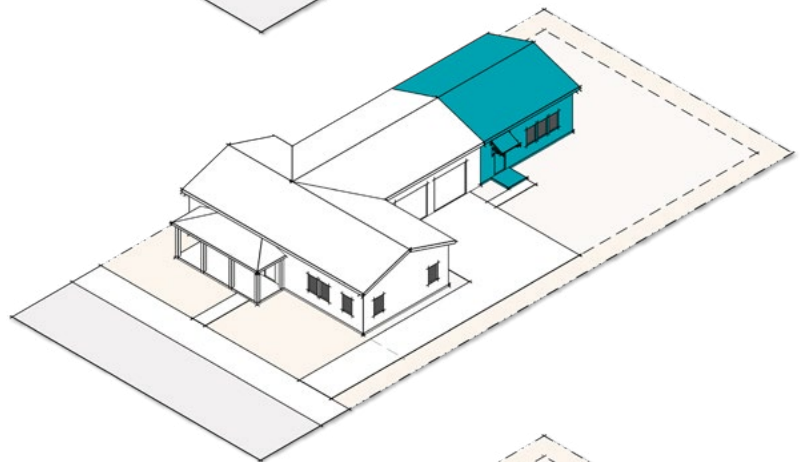
An ADU that is physically separate from the primary residential structure.



2

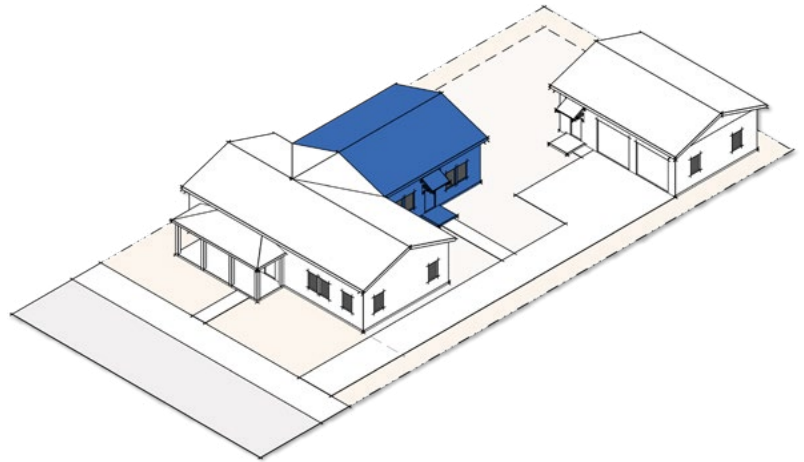
Attached ADU

An ADU that is physically attached to a single-family home and has its own separate entrance. This type enlarges the existing building's footprint. It can also be attached on a second story as long as it is not taller than the allowed height of the primary residence.



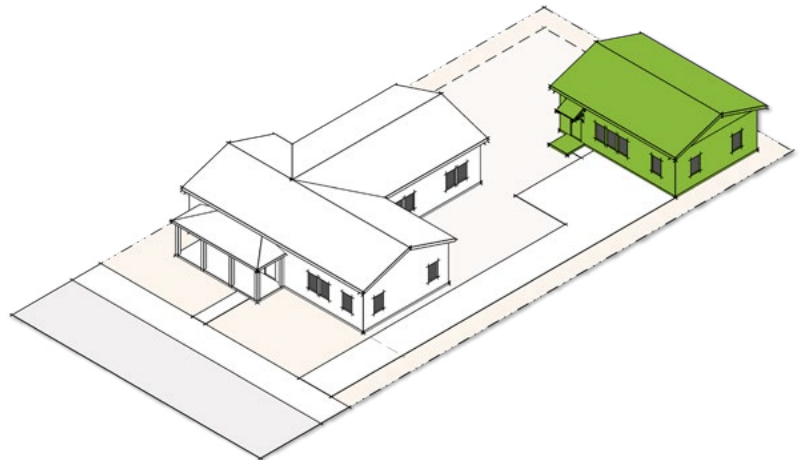
3 Conversion of Existing Residence

An ADU that is converted from space within a single-family home or a multifamily structure. This type does not typically enlarge the existing building's footprint. Unlike a JADU, this is a full ADU that includes its own bathroom and complete kitchen. It must have its own separate entrance.



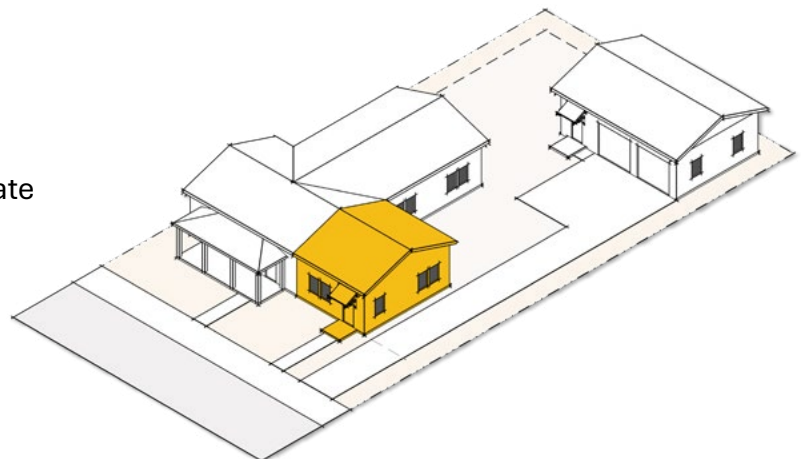
4 Conversion of Existing Accessory Structure

An ADU that is converted from space within an existing accessory structure on the lot. For example, converting an existing detached garage.



5 Junior ADU (JADU)

An ADU that is 500 sq. ft. or less, is entirely contained within a single-family house, and has its own separate entrance. This type does not enlarge the existing building's footprint. The JADU can share a bathroom with the house it is contained within, but cannot share a kitchen.



ADU Basics

WHAT CONSTRUCTION OPTIONS DO I HAVE?

ADUs are typically small, relatively simple structures, but there are still different ways to build them. Each method has its own benefits and drawbacks. Consider what works best with your budget and site-specific conditions. Note that both options need an engineered foundation plan.

Traditional Wood Framed

This is the most common construction method for small residential buildings. Homes are built on-site from scratch (also called “stick-built”).

Benefits

- Widely available materials and contractors with expertise
- Greater customization and easy changes during construction
- Better for unique properties (steep slopes, rocky terrain, small spaces)

Drawbacks

- Longer construction timeline
- Weather-dependent (extreme weather can cause delays)
- More daily disruption (noise, material storage)

Pre-Fabricated

This method is gaining popularity in ADU projects. These are built off-site in a factory, and can be delivered in pieces (panels), room-sized units (modular), or full dwellings (manufactured). Approval by state agencies will be required for the plans and the factory construction.

Benefits

- Lower design / engineering costs
- Faster construction
- Less on-site disruption
- Quality inspected from the start

Drawbacks

- Upfront costs (may need to make larger deposits before site work begins including potentially high tax and delivery costs)
- Site access requirements (delivery cranes need adequate space near site and roads with adequate widths / turning radii that can support the load of the delivery)
- Manufacturing / licensing requirements

FOUNDATION REQUIREMENTS

Both options require engineered foundation details, an important design cost consideration. These require a professional engineer and soils report.

STANDARDIZED ADU PLANS

*If choosing to build through wood framed construction, County of Ventura offers standardized ADU plans for 1, 2 and 3 bedroom layouts to help streamline the design and permitting process. **See pages 32-34** for more information.*



Example of wood framed construction



Example of modular prefabricated construction

ADU Basics

WHICH ADU TYPE SHOULD I CHOOSE?

The table on the next page provides a comparison of ADU types based on the following factors. Each ADU project will be unique and may not reflect the values in this table. Consider what is most important for your ADU project.

Impact on Cost

The complexity of the design and architectural drawings, engineering for the foundation, building new versus converting a space, and the size of the ADU will all influence the cost of the project.

Impact on Space of the Primary Residence

ADU conversions created within an existing structure will reduce the overall square footage available within it.

Impact on Yard Space

New attached or detached dwellings may reduce the amount of usable outdoor space. Thoughtful placement of an ADU on the lot can reduce impact. Conversions will take up the space of existing structures reducing the impact on yard space.

Impact on Parking

Conversion of existing enclosed parking spaces such as a garage or carport may reduce the amount of parking available if space for additional parking cannot be located on the site.

Impact on Privacy

Different ADU types might impact sight, sound, and physical privacy differently. ADUs created within, or attached, to an existing structure may be less private in terms of noise and proximity than fully detached ADUs.



GARAGE CONVERSION

Converting an existing attached or detached garage into an ADU can be a cost-effective way to add an ADU to your lot, with less construction disruption than may be necessary for other ADU types. Replacement spaces for parking lost as a result of converting a garage into an ADU are not required.



Example of a detached ADU

ADU Basics

COMPARISON OF ADU TYPES

	Detached ADU	Attached ADU	Conversion of Existing Residence
Impact on Cost	 Highest expected cost. The ADU will be built from scratch and you will be required to extend utilities and build a new foundation.	 Medium to high cost. Though adding onto an existing building, you'll still need a new foundation, roof and exterior walls. You may need to install new or separate utilities.	 Medium expected cost but likely lower than new construction. Will likely be converting already conditioned space which reduces upgrades needed to meet Building Code requirements. Utilities may need to be upgraded.
Impact on Space of the Primary Residence	 The ADU is completely separate from the single-family house or multi-unit building, so there is little spatial impact on the primary residence.	 Low impact since the ADU will occupy space attached to the primary building footprint, but will be physically separate from the interior space of the primary residence.	 Medium impact since the ADU will occupy space within the existing primary building footprint, but will be physically separate from the interior space of the primary residence.
Impact on Yard Space	 High impact. Yard space will be reduced since it will be constructed within the existing yard.	 Medium impact. Some yard space is used for the ADU, but less than a detached ADU since there is no separation from the primary residence.	 No impact. No yard space will be used, since it is contained within the footprint of the single-family house or non-livable space of the multifamily building.
Impact on Parking	 Existing parking is not likely to be impacted.	 Existing parking is not likely to be impacted.	 High impact if converting an existing attached garage. No impact if converting an existing non-parking portion of the primary residence.
Impact on Privacy	 Generally low impact. Visual privacy may vary depending on the location of windows and doors.	 Medium impact. Shared interior walls may impact privacy between ADU and primary residence.	 Medium impact. Shared interior walls may impact privacy between the ADU and the primary residence.
Level of Impact			

	Conversion of Existing Accessory Structure	JADU
Impact on Cost	 Medium expected cost but likely lower than new construction. Will not need a new foundation, roof and exterior walls, though costs may exceed expectations if there is a need to upgrade existing walls, electrical, plumbing, or other Building Code requirements. Utilities may need to be upgraded.	 Costs may be lower than other types since new foundation, roof and exterior walls are not needed and these are typically smaller units than other conversion types. Utilities may need to be upgraded.
Impact on Space of the Primary Residence	 The ADU is completely separate from the single-family house, so there is little spatial impact on the primary residence.	 High impact since the JADU will occupy space within the single-family house and an existing bathroom may be shared with the JADU.
Impact on Yard Space	 No impact. No additional yard space will be used for the ADU, since it is repurposing an existing accessory structure.	 No impact. No yard space will be used for the JADU, since it is contained entirely within the footprint of the single-family house.
Impact on Parking	 High impact if an existing detached garage is converted to an ADU as parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot.	 High impact if an existing garage is converted to a JADU as parking will be eliminated or will be located elsewhere on the lot. No impact if converting an existing non-parking portion of the single-family house.
Impact on Privacy	 Generally low impact. Visual privacy may vary depending on the location of windows and doors.	 High impact. Shared interior walls and the option to share a bathroom will impact privacy between JADU and the single-family house.
Level of Impact		

ADU Basics

HOW CAN ADUS HELP THE COUNTY OF VENTURA COMMUNITY?

The current production of housing in California is not enough to meet people's needs. The lack of housing is causing average housing costs to rise, forcing people to either find affordable housing further from their workplace, or settle for smaller shared spaces that reduce their quality of life.

ADUs can help address the need for affordable housing by providing livable units in walkable contexts that can be developed relatively easily, quickly, and affordably. Recent changes to State ADU Law make developing ADUs easier to help address the community's housing needs and deliver the benefits described below:

Aging in Community

Enjoy independent, accessible living options for aging adults or as a housing option for a caregiver.

House Your Loved Ones

Experience greater privacy for multi-generational households.

Help the Environment

More housing options within already developed urban areas reduces commuting to jobs and services and reduces need to develop wilderness and agricultural lands for housing.

Earn Rental Income

Earn supplemental income through long-term rental agreements / programs.

Support Your Local Community

Add housing options for local farmworkers, starter housing, or senior housing.

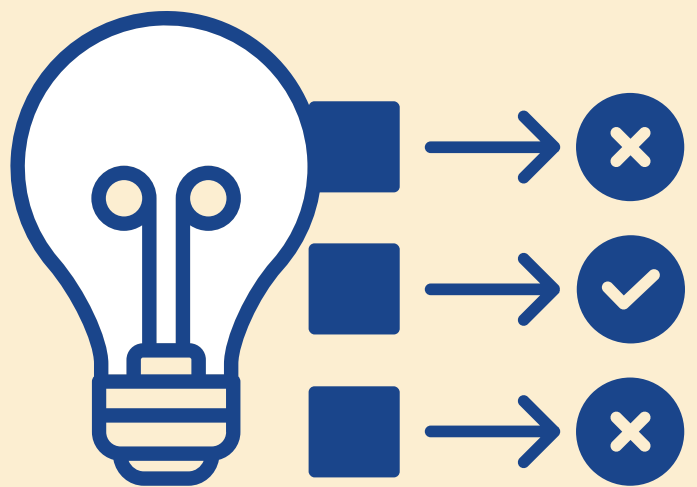
Support Your Local Economy

Source building materials and labor from local vendors to grow the local economy.

Below: Aerial image of County of Ventura, CA

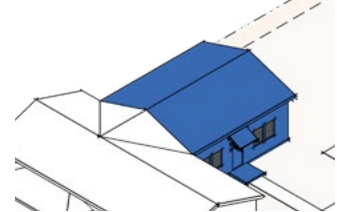
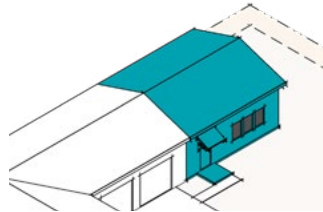
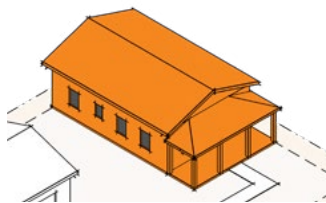


PART B: LEARNING THE RULES



Learning the Rules

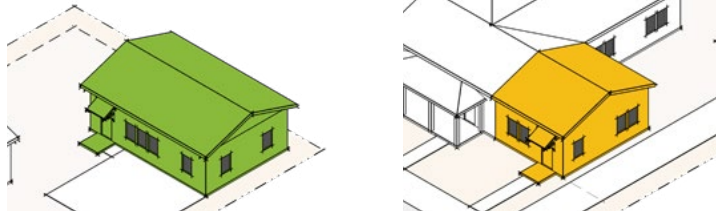
SUMMARY OF ADU ZONING STANDARDS



	Detached ADU	Attached ADU	Conversion of Existing Residence
Zones Where ADUs are Allowed²	R1, R2, RES, RPD, R/MU, RHD, RA, RE, RO, CPD/CBD, OS, AE, TP, CR, CRE, CR1, CR2, RB, RBH, CRPD, COS, CA	R1, R2, RES, RPD, R/MU, RA, RE, RO, CPD/CBD, OS, AE, TP, CR, CRE, CR1, CR2, RB, RBH, CRPD, COS, CA	R1, R2, RES, RPD, R/MU, RHD, RA, RE, RO, CPD/CBD, OS, AE, TP, CR, CRE, CR1, CR2, RB, RBH, CRPD, COS, CA
Location of ADU	In a new structure on the same lot as a single-family or multifamily structure	Attached to a single-family house	Within a single-family house or non-livable space of a multifamily structure
Max. Number of ADUs per Lot³	Single-family: 1 per lot Multifamily: 1 for every existing unit on the lot, up to 8	Single-family: 1 per lot Multifamily: Not allowed	Single-family: 1 per lot Multifamily: Up to 25% of the number of existing dwelling units onsite, but at least 1
Max. Size (sq. ft.)	Lots 9,000sf and under: 850 for studio/1 bed and 1000 for 2+ bed Lots over 9,000sf to 10ac: 1,200 Lots 10ac or larger: 1,800	Lots 9,000sf and under: 850 for studio/1 bed and 1000 for 2+ bed Lots over 9,000sf to 10ac: 1,200 Lots 10ac or larger: 1,800	No limit; 150sf max. expansion from existing footprint (for ingress/egress) for single-family
Max. Height (ft)	16 ⁴	25; not taller than the allowed height of the primary residence on the lot	N/A
Min. Front Setback (ft)⁵	Same as zone	Same as zone	Same as zone
Min. Side Setback (ft)	4	4	Same as existing structure
Min. Rear Setback (ft)	4	4	Same as existing structure
Max. Total Lot Coverage	Same as zone ⁶	Same as zone	Exempt from max. lot coverage
Unit Entrance	Separate unit entrance required	Separate unit entrance required	Separate unit entrance required
Parking	1 covered/uncovered space ⁷	1 covered/uncovered space ⁷	None ⁸
Kitchen	Full kitchen	Full kitchen	Full kitchen
Bathroom	Full bathroom	Full bathroom	Full bathroom

This table summarizes key standards. Refer to **NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7** and **CZO Sec. 8175-5.24** for all ADU standards.

Note: This section includes content from Coastal Zoning Ordinance ADU amendments pending certification and approval from Housing and Community Development and Coastal Commission as of August 2026.



	Conversion of Existing Accessory Structure	JADU ¹
Zones Where ADUs are Allowed²	R1, R2, RES, RPD, R/MU, RA, RE, RO, CPD/CBD, OS, AE, TP, CR, CRE, CR1, CR2, RB, RBH, CRPD, COS, CA	R1, R2, RES, RA, RE, RO, CR, CRE, CR1, CR2, RB, RBH, CRPD
Location of ADU	Within an existing accessory structure on the same lot as a single-family house	Entirely within a single-family house
Max. Number of ADUs per Lot³	Single-family: 1 per lot Multifamily: Not allowed	Single-family: 1 per lot Multifamily: Not allowed
Max. Size (sq. ft.)	No limit; 150sf max. expansion from existing footprint (for ingress/egress)	500
Max. Height (ft)	N/A	N/A
Min. Front Setback (ft)⁵	Same as zone	Same as zone
Min. Side Setback (ft)	Same as existing structure	Same as existing structure
Min. Rear Setback (ft)	Same as existing structure	Same as existing structure
Max. Total Lot Coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage	Exempt from max. lot coverage
Unit Entrance	Separate unit entrance required	Separate unit entrance required
Parking	None ⁸	None ⁸
Kitchen	Full kitchen	Efficiency kitchen
Bathroom	Full bathroom	Full bathroom or access to a full bathroom in the primary dwelling

Footnotes

¹Owner-occupancy is only required for JADUs if the unit shares sanitation facilities with the existing structure. Refer to NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.7(e)(3) / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.4(e).

²If your property is in a Coastal Zone, your ADU may require a CDP. Refer to **pages 18-19**, and CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.4.

³Can be combined with other ADU types on a lot. Refer to **pages 16-17**. If your property is in OS, AE, TP, COS or CA, you may only have one ADU / JADU per lot. Refer to NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.5 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.6.

⁴Up to 18 feet for a lot within ½ mile of a major transit stop or a high-quality transit corridor or for a lot with a multistory, multifamily structure. With a 20ft setback from all property lines, a detached ADU can be as tall as the allowed height of the primary residence on the lot. See NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.5(d)(1)(d) / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.6(e)(1)(iv).

⁵Front yard setbacks cannot preclude an ADU that meets NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.5 (j) / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.6(k).

⁶Detached ADUs that meet NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.4 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.5 are exempt from max. lot coverage.

⁷No parking spaces are required if the ADU meets criteria listed on **page 31**.

⁸No replacement parking required if ADU is a conversion of existing garage.

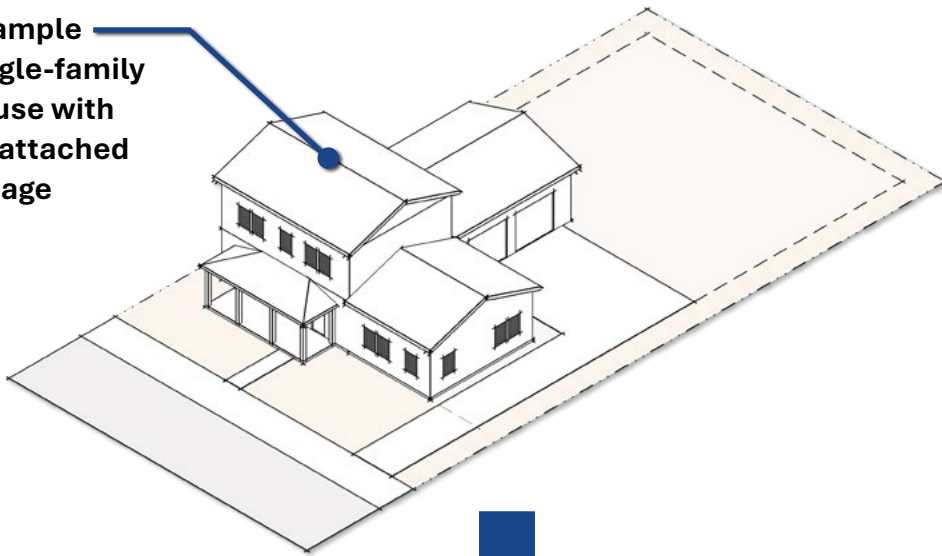
This table summarizes key standards. Refer to **NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7** and **CZO Sec. 8175-5.24** for all ADU standards.

Learning the Rules

HOW MANY ADUS CAN I HAVE ON A LOT WITH A SINGLE-FAMILY HOUSE?

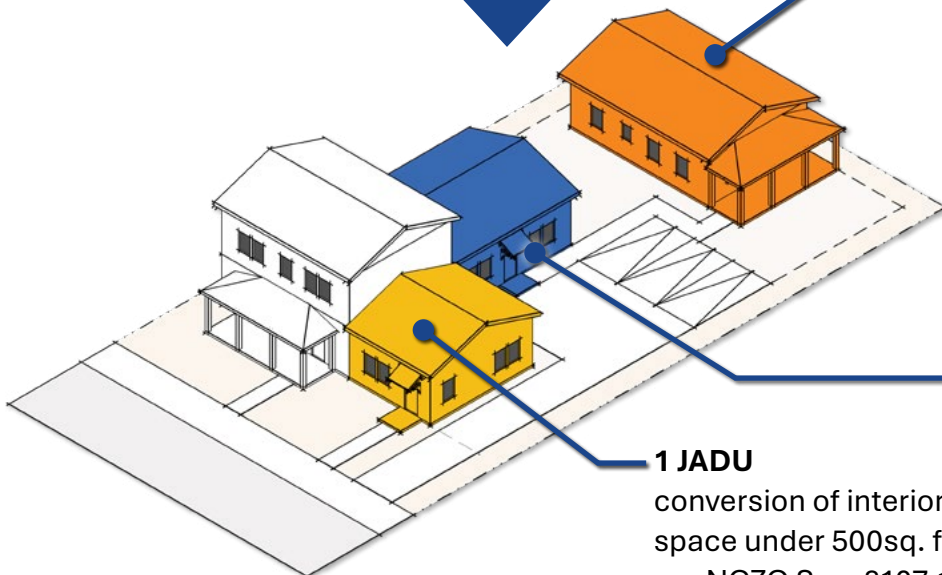
As long as each ADU type meets County Zoning Ordinances and State development standards, you can add **up to three units on a lot** with a single-family house in a residential or mixed-use zone: Two ADUs and a JADU. Note: Only one ADU is permitted in OS, AE, TP, COS or CA zones (Refer to NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.5 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.6).

Example
single-family
house with
an attached
garage



ADU STATE LAW

*ADU State Law is constantly evolving. Please see **County of Ventura's ADU website** for the most up-to-date information on State Law.*



1 New Detached ADU meeting size maximums per NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.4 or Sec. 8107-1.7.5 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.5 or Sec. 8175-5.24.6

1 ADU conversion of the primary residence or accessory structure per NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.4 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.5; **OR 1 Attached ADU** meeting size maximums per NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.5 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.6

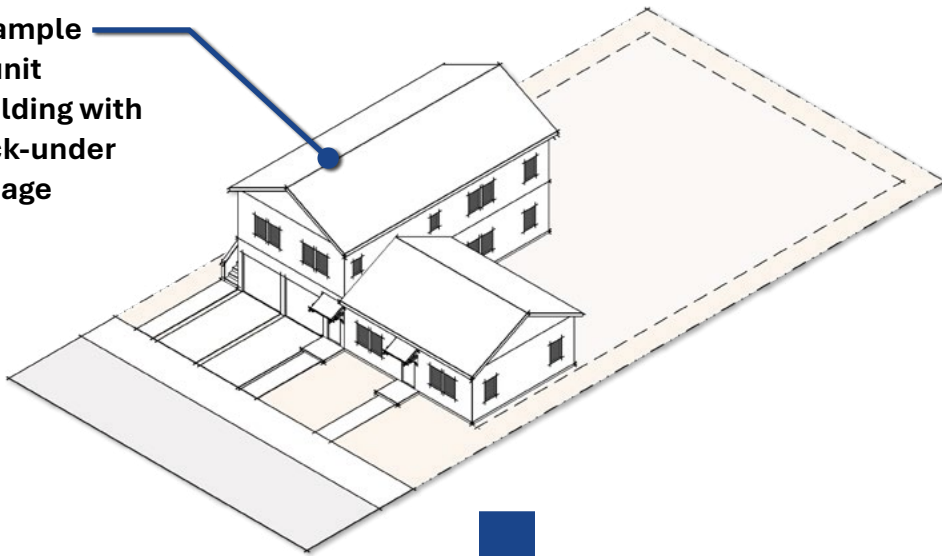
1 JADU conversion of interior space under 500sq. ft. per NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.6 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.7

Learning the Rules

HOW MANY ADUS CAN I HAVE ON A LOT WITH A MULTIFAMILY BUILDING?

For lots with a multifamily building within a residential or mixed use zone, the number of ADUs you can add **varies based on how many existing primary units you have on your lot**: At least **1 conversion ADU** of non-livable space or up to 25% of the number of existing multifamily units, and up to **8 detached ADUs** but no more than the existing number of units on the lot. ADUs must meet County Zoning Ordinances and State development standards.

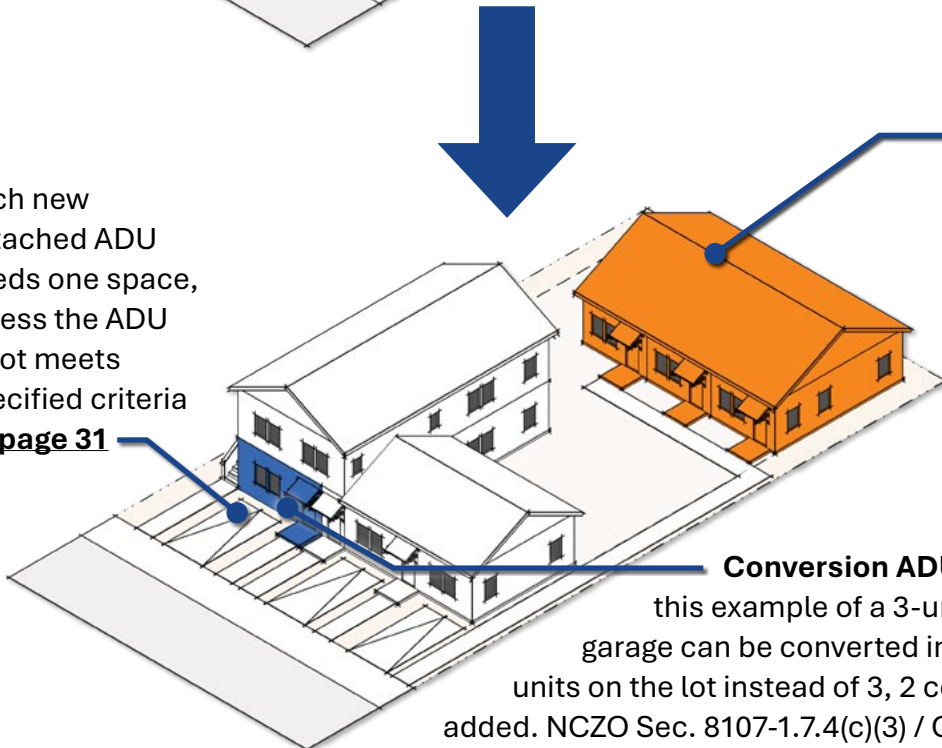
Example
3-unit
building with
tuck-under
garage



WHAT IS MULTIFAMILY?

*For the purposes of creating an ADU, a structure with two or more attached dwellings on a single lot is considered a multifamily dwelling structure (**HCD ADU Handbook**).*

Each new detached ADU needs one space, unless the ADU or lot meets specified criteria on **page 31**



Detached ADUs. In this example, three detached ADUs can be added. They must be detached from the multifamily structure but can be attached to each other. NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.4(d) / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.5(e)

Conversion ADUs of non-livable space. In this example of a 3-unit building, the tuck-under garage can be converted into 1 ADU. If there were 8 units on the lot instead of 3, 2 conversion ADUs could be added. NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.4(c)(3) / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.6(d)(3)

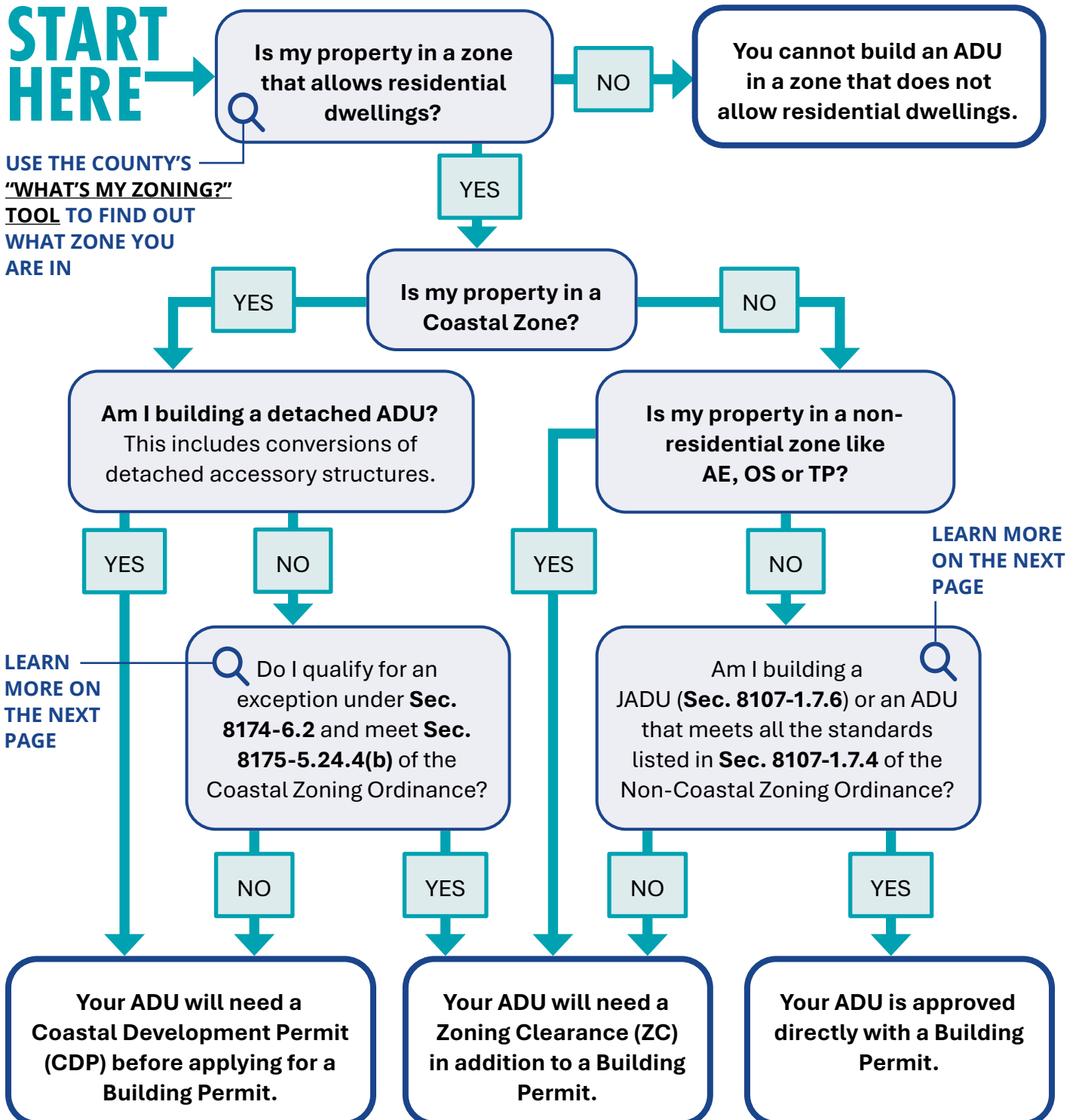
Learning the Rules

WHAT ADU PERMIT DO I NEED?

Follow this permit type flowchart to find out.

**START
HERE** →

USE THE COUNTY'S
"WHAT'S MY ZONING?"
TOOL TO FIND OUT
WHAT ZONE YOU
ARE IN



Closer look on Coastal Development Permit Exceptions

Coastal Zoning Ordinance (CZO) Sec. 8174-6.2 requires a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) for certain improvements to existing single-family and multifamily buildings (including some ADUs) because they may involve a risk of adverse effects on coastal resources.

Check the CZO Sec. 8174-6.2.2(c) (single-family) and Sec. 8174-6.2.3(c) (multifamily) to see if your property and expected ADU project require a CDP.

If you qualify for an exception in the sections listed above, you should also check CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.4(b). You may be able to qualify for a Zoning Clearance (ZC) allowing you to bypass the CDP process if you are building one of the following types of ADUs:

- JADUs
- ADUs converted within existing primary dwelling or attached accessory structure
- Attached ADU additions to an existing primary dwelling

Closer look on ADUs Allowed Directly with a Building Permit

Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance (NCZO) Sec. 8107-1.7.4 describes four ADU scenarios that do not require a separate ZC if they meet specific criteria:

- ADUs within the space of single-family dwelling and accessory structures
- New detached ADUs with single-family dwelling (850 sq. ft. or less)
- ADUs in existing non-livable space within multifamily dwelling building
- Detached ADUs with multifamily dwelling

Check Sec. 8107-1.7.4 for the standards each of these ADU scenarios need to follow to qualify for a Building Permit only application.

These are applicable only in residential zones. If your property is zoned OS, AE, or TP, it always requires a ZC.

DO YOU KNOW YOUR ZONE?

Before you dive deeper into ADUs, it's helpful to know what is allowed within your zone. Click on the link or scan the QR code to access the County's

"What's My Zoning?"

tool and see what zoning district your property is in.



ADUS AND TAXES

*An ADU may trigger a partial property value assessment which could result in an increased property tax. Refer to the **FAQs** for more info.*

Note: This section includes content from Coastal Zoning Ordinance ADU amendments pending certification and approval from Housing & Community Development and Coastal Commission as of August 2026.

Learning the Rules

WHAT OTHER REGULATIONS SHOULD I CHECK?

For some properties, a special zone or district may require additional review or application materials for your ADU. Talk to County of Ventura staff to find out if your property falls within any of these areas and how that might impact what you can build:

- Coastal Zones - Some ADUs may require a Coastal Development Permit (CDP), **see page 18**
- Scenic Resource Protection (SRP) Overlay zone
- Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridor (HCWC) and Critical Wildlife Passage Areas (CWPA) Overlay zones, within Surface Water Feature or Near Wildlife Crossing Structure
- Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA)
- Fire Hazard Severity Zone, Wildland Urban Interfaces and neighborhoods next to undeveloped natural areas
- Flood Zone
- **Tree Protection Ordinance**
- Historic Districts

While ADU permits may be approved administratively by default, planning permit applications in these areas may require additional review, however all ADU permits are approved without a public hearing. Staff at the Planning Counter will help guide you through the permitting process.

PREPARE YOUR ADU FOR FIRE HAZARDS

*Wildfires are a reality throughout California and the County of Ventura, so knowing the risk in your area matters. Locate your property and learn about **Fire Hazard Zones on CalFire's website**. Learn about design and landscaping to help prevent fire risk on **Readyforwildfire.org***

For additional resources contact the County Fire Department at (805) 389-9738 or fireprevention@ventura.county.gov



PART C: STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



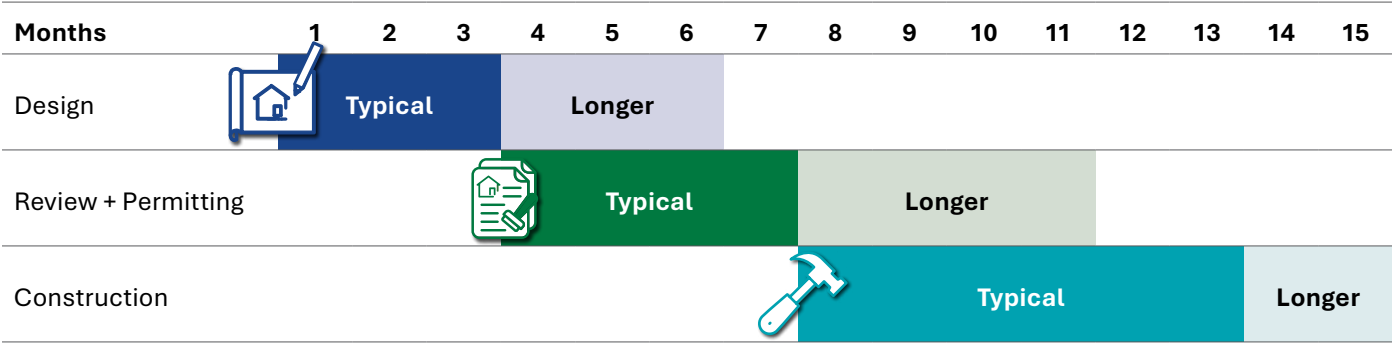
A Step-by-Step Guide

PROCESS + TIMELINE

Development Timeline for ADUs in the County of Ventura

ADUs need time for design, County review and permitting, and construction. While each project will be unique, the following timeline illustrates the typical amount of time needed for each phase of ADU development. It may vary depending on your contractor and design project team, permit type, and site-specific requirements.

- Design Phase:** 3-6 months
- Review + Permitting Phase:** 4-8 months
- Construction Phase:** 6-12 months



This estimated timeline is provided for planning purposes. Individual projects may take more or less time depending on site specific requirements and conditions.

DESIGN PHASE

Step 1: Learn the Rules

- A** ADUs are allowed in all of the County's zoning districts where single-family and multifamily dwellings are permitted. Use the County's **"What's My Zoning?"** tool to determine your zoning.
- B** Get familiar with the different types of ADUs. **See pages 6-11.**
- C** Review the Summary of ADU Zoning Standards (**see pages 14-15**) to see what kinds of standards ADUs need to follow.
- D** Check if any additional requirements might apply to your property, especially if you are in a Coastal Zone (**see pages 19-20**).

Step 2: Set Project Goals

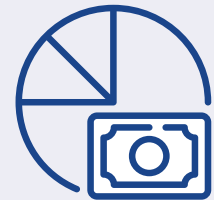
- A** **Write down project goals.**
 - Will the ADU generate income? What are your financial goals (return on investment)?
 - Will you use the ADU for aging in the community? What will your accessibility needs be?
 - How many people will live in the ADU? Will you live there or will a tenant?
- B** Review the ADU Brainstorming Checklist (**see pages 28-31**) to identify what ADU type best meets your goals and fits on your property.
- C** **Decide what ADU type you want to build.**

Step 3: Set a Budget

- A** Use the Ventura County **ADU Cost Calculator** to **inform your budget** (how much can you afford to spend versus how much it will cost to build the ADU) and **consider how you are funding the ADU** (savings, loans, or other financial assistance).

The ADU cost calculator is a helpful tool at the beginning stages of a project to get a sense of typical costs associated with different design

decisions, but it does not guarantee costs and should not replace an official cost estimate from a design professional.



- B** Beyond construction costs, consider that utility bills such as water, sewer, gas, electricity, and trash may increase as a result of adding an ADU.

Step 4: Design Your ADU

- A** **Determine who you will need on your project team**, which could include an architect, designer, design / build contractor, foundation engineer, geotechnical engineer, general contractor or prefabricated ADU vendor.
- B** **Work with your project team as needed to develop your ADU design.** Consult Section 8107-1.7 of the NCZO and Section 8175-5.24 of the CZO, and applicable County, State and

Federal building codes. **See page 35** for key design tips to keep in mind.

OR

If you plan to add a new detached ADU, consider using one of the **County's free-to-use standardized ADU designs**, available for 1-, 2- and 3-bedroom units.



DESIGN PHASE (CONTINUED)

See pages 32-34 for more information on the pre-approved designs, and visit the **County's website** to download the plan set. Note that it may still be necessary to hire a designer, architect and/or engineer to adjust foundation details and draw a site plan for standardized ADU plans.

C Consider how the ADU is sited on your property, how it will connect to existing infrastructure, or if it will need new infrastructure connections.

- **Contact your utility providers to determine whether the existing sewer and/or water has the capacity to support the ADU.** If you decide to connect your ADU sewer and/or water directly into public infrastructure, then you may be subject to impact fees. Fees will vary on a case-by-case basis.
- **If additional modifications need to be made to the site** to accommodate the ADU, such as grading and/or construction of retaining

walls to provide flat space for the ADU, this will **need its own grading permit through the Ventura County Public Works Agency**. See more on agencies that may be involved in the ADU process on **pages 36-37**.

- **Will you be adding solar panels to your ADU?** This is required for new construction, non-manufactured, detached ADUs. Consider the orientation of the ADU and the slope of the roof to best maximize the efficiency of the solar panels.

D **Work with your project team to develop a cost estimate.** You may need to refine the ADU design based on available budget.

E **Secure funding** for the development of your desired ADU. Having funds lined up during this phase helps to confirm that you have a realistic budget and can pay for upfront soft costs (permits, architectural fees).



CLOSER LOOK: UTILITIES

Utility connections (water, sewer, gas, electricity, septic) will also impact what you can build on your lot and where. The information below includes state and local law on utility connections for ADUs, but you will need to confirm with your service providers, with your design team and Public Works staff (look up your water purveyor here).

- *ADUs and JADUs constructed at the same time as 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 or JADU will use compared to the primary residence (based on square footage, bedrooms, or total plumbing fixtures).*
- *Conversion ADUs and JADUs on a single-family lot are not required to have separate connections and connection fees / capacity charges are not required.*
- *All other 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. Contact your property's service provider for electricity, gas, water and sewer for more information on upgrades and new connections. **If your property is outside the water or sewer service districts, contact the County's Environmental Health Division to find out if your water well or septic system can support the additional capacity of an ADU.***

COUNTY REVIEW + PERMITTING PHASE

Step 5: Prepare and Submit Permit Application

- A** Finalize building design and prepare construction plans for permit review. The Homeowner's ADU Checklist provides a list of potential clearances and documents you will need throughout the permitting process.

If a **ZC and CDP from the Planning Division is required**, you may apply for a planning entitlement prior to applying for a Building Permit. Use the permit flowchart on **page 18** to identify what permit you need to apply for.

For a **ZC**, submit your permit application through the County's online permitting portal, **VC Citizen Access**:

- Scan or click on the QR code and register for a free account.
- Create a new application under the Planning tab.
- Submit all required documents and pay online via credit or debit card. See additional ZC permitting resources: **ZC application packet** and **ZC application instructions**
- You can check the status of your permit when you log into the portal. Make a note of your permit number for easy access, if you need to contact a staff person



If a **CDP is required**, contact the County Planning Division to work with the Discretionary Permit Intake Coordinator and to learn about permitting timelines. See the following resources for a CDP application.

- **CDP Discretionary Permit application packet**
- **CDP Discretionary Permit process info sheet**

Alternatively, you may apply for a **Building Permit first**, and the Building and Safety Division will route your application to agencies which require review, including the Planning Division. Note, for this path you are required to fill out an **Early Plan Review Agreement**.

Remember to submit the **ADU Rental Estimation Form** along with your permit application.

- B** Apply for a Building Permit. Similarly to the Planning Permit, use the County's permitting portal **VC Citizen Access** and create a new application under the Building and Safety tab.

Fill out the online application and submit all required documents. Contact the Building and Safety Division if you have questions about the application.

During the Building Permit process, you will be assigned a **new unit address number** for emergency responses.

- C** Pay fees. All fees, including plan check, permit fees, applicable impact fees, and those collected by external agencies, must be paid before the Building Permit can be issued. Pay fees with each corresponding agency and upload the receipt to Citizen Access.

- D** Obtain approval from other agencies. Once your Building Permit application is deemed complete, the Building and Safety Division will send it to other agencies that need to review and approve it. If you need to get approvals from agencies that are not part of the Citizen Access system, your assigned Building Permit technician will let you know which agencies you will need to contact to obtain approval.

See **pages 36-37** for a list of County agencies that may be involved in the ADU permitting process.

- E** The Building and Safety Division will send plan check comments to you or whomever you have designated as your agent.

Corrections or additional information may be required before an application is considered complete.



You will need to revise your plans to address all your plan check comments before the County issues a Building Permit for your ADU.

COUNTY REVIEW + PERMITTING PHASE (CONTINUED)



CLOSER LOOK: SOLAR PANEL REQUIREMENTS

According to the California Department Housing and Community Development's ADU handbook "**newly constructed ADUs are subject to the Energy Code requirement to provide solar panels** if the unit(s) is a newly constructed, non-manufactured, detached ADU." This means unless you are doing a garage conversion, using modular or prefabricated units, or building an addition to the primary dwelling, you will need to provide solar panels.

Check with the County Building and Safety Division on details and requirements for solar panels on ADUs. **Solar panels will need a separate Building Permit application from the ADU.**

CONSTRUCTION PHASE

Step 6: Construction + Inspections

- A** With your Building Permit issued, you can **start construction of your ADU!**
- B** There will be several inspections over the course of construction. Inspections happen on-site, coordinated with specific stages of construction. **Inspections must be scheduled, typically, by your contractor or builder.**
- C** **Final Inspection and County Certificate of Occupancy** is required to move in and use the space.

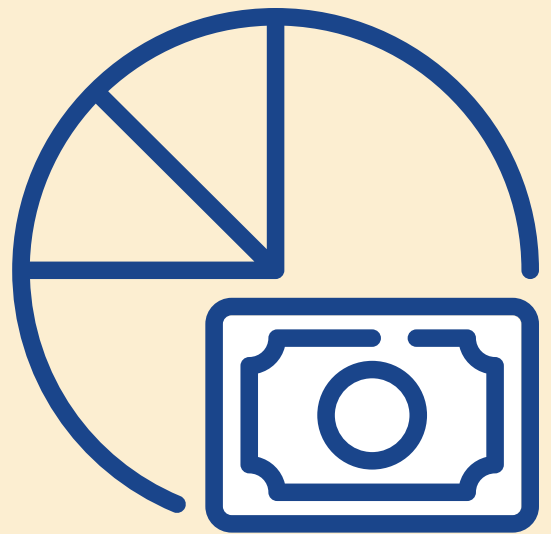


Step 7: Move Into Your ADU!

- A** Building occupancy is allowed only after Final Inspection is complete and you **receive a Certificate of Occupancy** from the County Building and Safety Division.
- B** **If renting the ADU, fulfill landlord obligations** for habitable premises and comply with all applicable laws.
- C** **Perform regular maintenance** of ADU as needed.



PART D: ADU RESOURCES



ADU BRAINSTORMING CHECKLIST

1

Determine Number and Type of ADUs Allowed

Allowed number of ADUs/JADUs varies by your zoning and what the primary residential structure is on your lot. Check the appropriate box. Note that each type must follow applicable zoning standards ([see pages 14-15](#)).

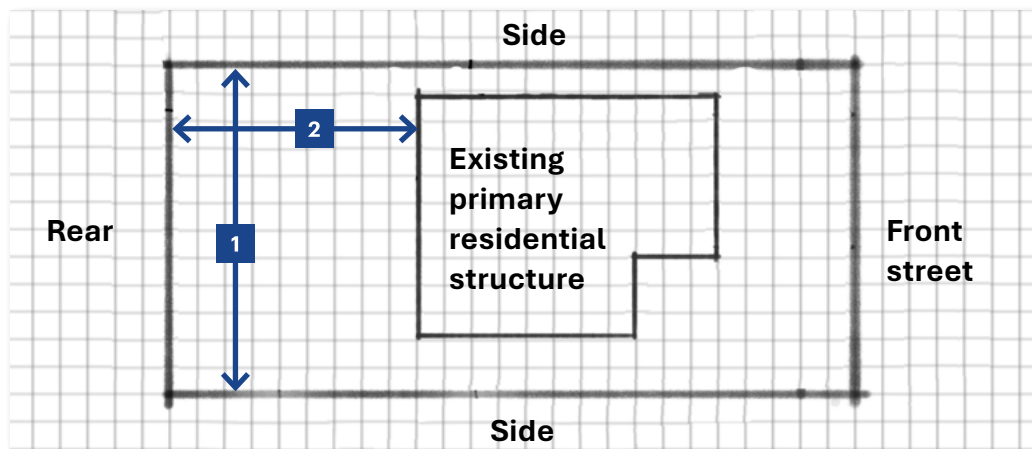
- ☐ **Single-family house:** Up to 3. 1 ADU conversion or New Attached ADU, 1 New Detached, and 1 JADU ([see page 16](#)).
- ☐ **Multifamily building:** Up to 25% of existing units but at least 1 ADU conversion of non-livable space, and up to 8 detached ADUs but no more than the existing number of units on the lot ([see page 17](#)).

2

Measure Backyard Size

Fill in the blank with measurements for your backyard width and depth. (If you're building an ADU conversion of existing residence or a JADU, skip to Step 4).

1 Yard width: 2 Yard depth:



DRAWING A SITE PLAN

At the beginning stages of ADU planning, it might be helpful to draw out your property to understand the space available for an ADU. Later on in the design and permitting process you will need to include a more formal site plan. Refer to [page 34](#) for what information it should show.

3

Determine ADU Buildable Area on Your Lot

An ADU cannot be located within a setback and cannot interfere with existing easements unless it is through the conversion of a legal existing structure, such as a garage (refer to a recent title report of your property to determine the approximate locations of any public easements). **Minimum required side and rear setbacks for new-construction ADUs are 4 ft, and a detached ADU is typically separated 10 ft from the primary structure.*** To determine the buildable area for your detached ADU, subtract these setbacks from your backyard dimensions from Step 2.

**Depending on the fire rating of exterior walls of the primary structure and ADU, required fire separation may be less. Contact County Fire Department.*

Buildable width: - 8 ft =
YARD WIDTH (from Step 2) SIDE SETBACKS

Buildable depth: - 14 ft =
YARD DEPTH (from Step 2) REAR SETBACK + DISTANCE TO MAIN STRCT.

Buildable area:

x =
BUILDABLE WIDTH BUILDABLE DEPTH BUILDABLE AREA

To calculate the buildable area for an attached ADU, subtract only 4 ft (instead of 14 ft) from the yard depth to get your buildable depth.

4

Determine ADU Size

The County's zoning standards set a maximum size for each type of ADU. Compare the buildable area you calculated above against the following maximum allowed ADU sizes.

- ☐ **I'm building a JADU:** Maximum allowed size is **500 sq. ft.**
- ☐ **I'm building an ADU new construction:** Max allowed size:
 - On lots 9,000 sq. ft. or less: **850 sq. ft. for a studio or 1 bedroom; 1000 sq. ft. for 2 or more bedrooms**
 - On lots over 9,000 sq. ft., but less than 10ac: **1,200 sq. ft.**
 - On lots 10ac or larger: **1,800 sq. ft.**
- ☐ **I'm building an ADU conversion:** Maximum size is **existing footprint**, except that a conversion of an accessory structure to an ADU on a lot with a single-family dwelling may be expanded up to 150 sq. ft. for ingress and egress.

ZONING STANDARDS

Steps 3 and 4 help you implement setbacks and floor area maximums. Be mindful of other zoning standards that apply to your ADU such as height, lot coverage and parking. Check out the ADU Zoning Summary on **pages 14-15**.

5

Choose Possible Unit Type(s)

Now that you know what can fit on your lot, think about how many bedrooms you would like your ADU to have. **Choose a unit type that would fit within the maximum allowed ADU size indicated in Step 4 and the buildable area in your yard determined in Step 3.**

The following table provides a typical size range for different unit types and which ADU type may accommodate it. These may vary based on specific site conditions and unit design.

- Detached and Attached ADUs can comfortably fit up to two bedrooms, if the lot is 9,000 sq. ft. or less. If the ADU is located on a lot with a greater unit size allowance, a three-bedroom unit could also fit for these types.
- Conversions of Existing Residence and Accessory Structure unit sizes depend on existing available space within the primary residence or accessory structures.
- JADUs can fit a studio or a small one bedroom. These must be 500 sq. ft. or less, so two and three bedrooms are not possible.

Table Key

- ✓ Unit type will likely fit within the ADU type
- ~ Unit type may fit depending on zoning, site and building constraints, and unit type size
- ✗ Unit type size does not fit within allowed ADU size

Refer to **pages 9-11** of this guidebook for tradeoffs between ADU types and **pages 14-15** for zoning standards summary table.

Unit Type (Typical Size)	Detached ADU	Attached ADU	Conversion of Existing Residence	Conversion of Existing Accessory Structure	JADU
☐ Studio (200-500 sq. ft.)	✓	✓	~	~	✓
☐ 1 Bedroom (400-750 sq. ft.)	✓	✓	~	~	~
☐ 2 Bedroom (700-1,000 sq. ft.)	✓	✓	~	~	✗
☐ 3 Bedroom (900-1,200 sq. ft.)	~	~	~	~	✗
☐ 3+ Bedroom (Up to 1,800 sq. ft.)	~	~	~	~	✗

6

Indicate Parking Approach

You do not need to provide parking for your ADU if any one of these is true:

- ☐ The unit is a JADU; or
- ☐ The unit is a studio (has zero bedrooms); or
- ☐ The ADU will be located within 1/2 mile of a transit stop (see **Ventura County Transportation Commission's transit maps**); or
- ☐ The ADU will be located within one block of a carshare vehicle; or
- ☐ The ADU will be located within a historic district (see the **County's Zoning District Map**); or
- ☐ The ADU will be located where on-street parking permits are required but not offered to the ADU occupant; or
- ☐ You created the ADU/JADU by converting an area previously used for parking (for example, you converted your garage into a dwelling unit); or
- ☐ The ADU meets the standards in and can be permitted under NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.4 / CZO Sec. 8175-5.24.5.

One parking space is required per ADU on your lot if none of the above apply to your ADU.

It can be covered, uncovered or in tandem parking on your driveway.

Indicate number of required parking spaces for your ADU:

If you are demolishing an existing garage, carport, or covered parking structure in conjunction with the construction of an ADU or converting it into an ADU, you do not need to provide replacement parking, but it may be helpful to keep track of how many spaces you are removing or adding to your lot.

Indicate proposed changes to parking on your lot:

Parking removed Parking added

Indicate proposed total parking on your lot:

Total parking for primary residential structure

Total parking for ADU(s)

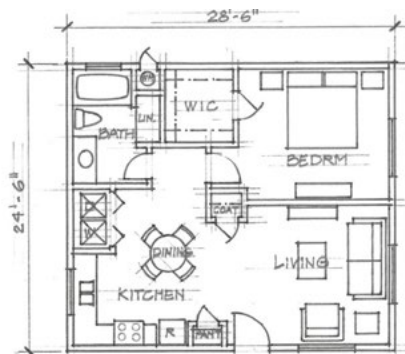
ADU Resources

STANDARDIZED ADU PLANS

The County of Ventura provides Standardized ADU plans available for you to use free of charge, saving you time and money in designing an ADU for your backyard. Confirm a plan option that fits on your lot and meets zoning standards, download the respective standardized plan set, add site specific information including a site plan, and apply for your corresponding permit ([see page 18](#) for which permit type you need).

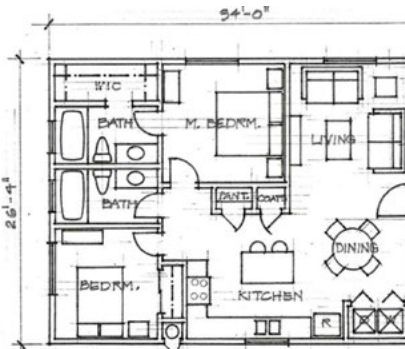


Scan or click on the QR code to access the ADU plans



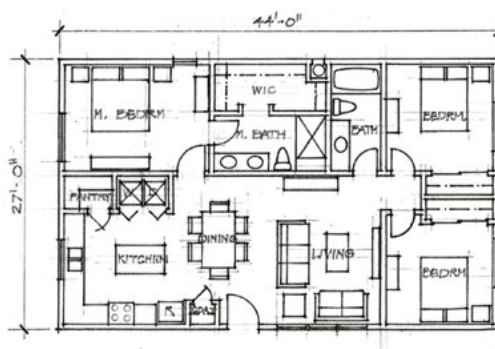
1 Bedroom

- 700 sq. ft.
- 1 bedroom / 1 bathroom
- In-unit washer and dryer
- Ample storage



2 Bedroom

- 900 sq. ft.
- 2 bedroom / 2 bathroom
- Large kitchen with island
- In-unit washer and dryer
- Ample storage



3 Bedroom

- 1,188 sq. ft.
- 3 bedroom / 2 bathroom
- Large kitchen with island
- Spacious primary bedroom and bathroom
- In-unit washer and dryer
- Ample storage

ADU Resources

SHOULD I USE A STANDARDIZED ADU PLAN?

Benefits

- The construction sets are **free of charge**.
- They **reduce the need to hire multiple design professionals**. A contractor can help you complete the permit application if you keep the designs as they are. Note: you will still need to hire a design professional to prepare energy forms as required by the CA Energy Code.
- They offer a **reduced permitting timeline** since the plans have been pre-reviewed by the County Building and Safety Division.

Using a standardized plan results in reduced costs and time spent in the design phase!

Drawbacks

- If your property has **challenging site constraints** like steep slopes, a stream, or an irregularly shaped lot, a standardized plan may not be able to meet your needs.
- They provide **minimal options to customize**. If you adjust the plans substantially, the County Building and Safety Division will have to do another review of the plans which would lengthen your permitting time.

If you need more custom design solutions for your ADU, you should explore hiring design professionals instead to help you create your dream ADU!



The standardized plans County of Ventura offers are all detached units. If you are considering an attached or conversion ADU, you should consider a custom plan that accounts for how it will interact with the primary residential structure.

Photo courtesy Hammer and Hand.

ADU Resources

HOW TO DRAW A SITE PLAN

What is a site plan?

A site plan is a bird's eye view sketch of your property that shows where your new ADU will be located. It is drawn to scale, typically 1 inch = 10 feet for lots less than 1 acre; 1 inch = 40 feet for larger lots. You will need to include a site plan even when using the standardized ADU plans as part of your permit application.

What am I required to show in a site plan?

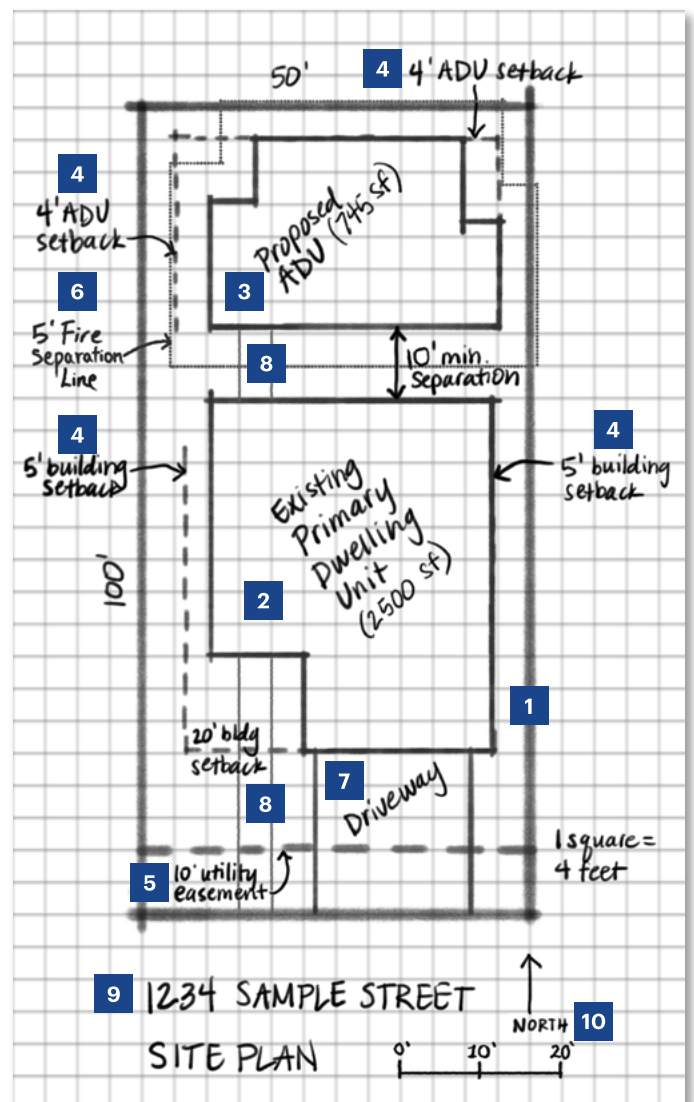
- 1 Property boundary lines and dimensions
- 2 Existing structures (labeled, with square footages and dimensions)
- 3 Proposed structures (labeled, with square footages, and dimensions)
- 4 Setback lines for all existing and proposed structures measuring from property lines and between structures
- 5 Easement location(s) (refer to a recent title report to locate any easements)
- 6 Fire separation lines adjacent to exterior walls*
- 7 Driveway location
- 8 Location of parking (if applicable), paths, mechanical equipment, and fences
- 9 Property address and Assessor Parcel Number
- 10 Arrow pointing north and a scale

Refer to the County's **Zoning Clearance Instructions** for more information.

* Required fire separation between structures and from property lines depends on the fire rating of exterior walls of the primary structure and ADU. Contact the County Fire Department for more information. If fire rated construction is required, provide a different graphical representation for the fire-rated walls, and note the fire code requirements for openings and projections.

Can I draw my own site plan?

Yes! Anyone can draw their own site plan as long as it is drawn to scale. If your property has a lot of topography or contains any special features like a creek, we recommend you engage an architect, designer, design/build contractor or prefabricated ADU vendor to prepare a site plan.



Example Site Plan

ADU Resources

DESIGN TIPS

Unit Access

- Provide a direct pedestrian path to the sidewalk and parking.
- Design for universal access for all users, especially if using the ADU to age in place.

Quality of Life

- Locate windows to maximize light and airflow.
- Use efficient closet and cabinet layouts to support storage in small spaces.

Site Design

- Place the building and layout the unit relative to the location of existing utilities (such as water, sewer and electricity).
- Plan for access to laundry facilities, either within the unit or shared with the primary residential structure.
- Decide whether outdoor spaces should be shared or separated between the ADU and primary residential structure.

Privacy

Evaluate privacy needs between the ADU, primary home, and adjacent neighbors. To increase privacy:

- In attached ADUs, interior conversions or JADUs, place compatible room types on shared walls to reduce noise (e.g., avoid placing a bedroom next to a kitchen or bathroom).
- Locate windows and doors facing away from the primary residential structure and neighbors.
- Use skylights, light tubes, or clerestory windows to provide light and air without compromising privacy.
- Place landscaping buffers such as trees or hedges as privacy screens and to absorb noise.



A sloped terrace to provide universal access to unit.



These window types maximize light and privacy.



Landscaping creates buffer between ADU and primary residential structure.



A raised patio provides dedicated outdoor space for ADU resident to use.

ADU Resources

ADU PERMITTING AGENCIES + FEES

The following County agencies and divisions may be involved in the ADU permitting process. Not all of these will be involved in every ADU permit. Read through each agency and division's role to see when they might become involved in ADU approvals.

Most of the agencies listed below will require a fee if there is a specific permit required from them. For example, if your lot requires grading, you would need to apply for a permit from the Land Development Services Division of the Public Works Agency and pay their permitting fee.



Resource Management Agency

County Planning Division

Role: Review and approve Zoning Clearance (ZC) application, Coastal Development Permit (CDP) application, and Rental Estimation form.

Fees: Fees will vary based on permit type and project-specific information. See the **Planning Division Fee Schedule** for more information.

Contact: (805) 654-2488 or Plan.counter@venturacounty.gov



County Building & Safety Division

Role: Review and approve Building Permit application, including review for compliance with building code requirements, new address issuance, energy requirements, inspections, and Certificate of Occupancy issuance.

Fees: Fees will vary based on project-specific information. See the **Building Permit Fee Estimator** to calculate applicable fees.

Contact: building@venturacounty.gov

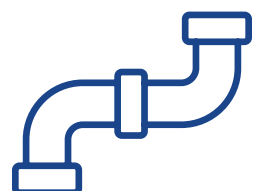
West County (805)654-2771 or East County (805)582-8064



County Environmental Health Division

Role: Review and approve sanitation requirements including Private Septic Certification, Onsite Wastewater Treatment System Clearance (OWTS) or sewer district connection.

Contact: (805) 654-2813 or ehdmessages@venturacounty.gov



Public Works Agency

County Land Development Services

Role: Review and approve Grading Permit application, Floodplain Development Permits, Soils Reports, Geological Reports, and water purveyor will-serve letters for public water systems.

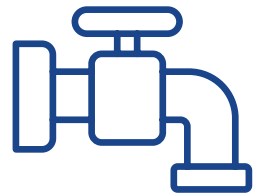
Contact: (805) 654-2030 or Pwa_ldservices@venturacounty.gov



County Watershed Protection District

Role: Provide well water quality approval for private water systems and review Stormwater systems.

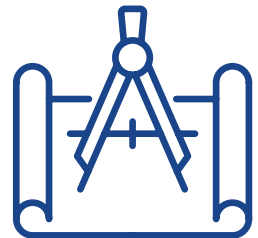
Contact: (805) 654-5051 or PWA.CountyStormwater@ventura.gov



County Surveyor

Role: Assist with legal lot status, easement locations, and recorded maps.

Contact: (805) 654-2068 or countysurveyor@venturacounty.gov



County Integrated Waste Management

Role: Identify what will be done with extra building/construction materials.

Contact: (805) 658-4321 or PWA.IWMD-CD@venturacounty.gov



County Air Pollution Control District

APCD Clearance

Role: Provide Air Pollution Control District (APCD) clearance, if necessary.

Contact: (805) 303-3700 or notifications@vcapcd.org



Ventura County Fire Department

Fire Prevention

Role: Review and approve Fire Prevention Form 610B.

Contact: (805) 389-9738 or fireprevention@ventura.county.gov



See the **Homeowner's ADU Checklist** for a more detailed list of potential clearances and documents you will need during the ADU permitting process.

ADU Resources

COUNTY KEY LINKS

County of Ventura ADU Links



[County of Ventura
ADU Website](#)
[Standardized ADU
Plans](#)

[Ventura County Cost Calculator](#)
[“What’s My Zoning?” Tool](#)
[Frequently Asked Questions](#)
[Homeowner’s ADU Checklist](#)

Permitting Resources

[Citizen Access](#)

[Zoning Clearance application
packet](#)

[Zoning Clearance application
instructions](#)

[Estimated Rental Amount Form
for ADUs/JADUs](#)

[Discretionary Permit Process info
sheet \(for Coastal Development
Permit\)](#)

[Discretionary Permit application
packet \(for Coastal Development
Permit\)](#)

[Coastal Zone Maps](#)

[County GIS Tool](#)

[Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance](#)

[Coastal Zoning Ordinance](#)

The following includes some third-party ADU resources, programs and vendors. Vendors included on this list are not endorsed by or affiliated with the County, and their work is not guaranteed by the County. This list is intended as a helpful starting point for researching different ADU options for your property.

General Educational Resources

California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD)

Comprehensive resource for general JADU and ADU information, including links to funding options, ADU handbook, and additional guidance documents.

Housing SoCal

Joint ADU website for Orange County, Gateway Cities and Ventura County.

How To ADU (YouTube)

Channel Founder Ryan O'Connell provides videos on an array of ADU-related topics, including state laws, grants and other funding sources, applicable building and municipal

codes, and answers to frequently asked questions.

Maxable

Provides a concierge package to support property owners through all phases of an ADU project, including services like contractor recommendations and products like floor plans. They also offer an ADU E-course and free tools to start learning about ADUs.

ADU Educational Workshop

Webinars and other resources about ADU construction, financing, and property management, as well as a link to an ADU construction cost calculator.

Financial Resources

California Community Economic Development Association (CCEDA)

Additional information for the CalHFA ADU Grant Program, including assistance with applying and a helpful FAQ section.

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

Federal funds allocated to non-entitlement jurisdictions, and non-entitlement jurisdictions that partner with non-federally recognized Native American communities for community

development activities including single- and multifamily rehabilitation and potential local ADU rehabilitation and planning programs. Applicants must be income qualified in low- to moderate-income households for rehabilitation and areas for planning. Contact your local jurisdictions for more information.

Casita Coalition ADU Finance Guide

Guidebook on loan types and financing options.

ADU Resources

DEFINITIONS

Terms from County of Ventura Zoning Ordinances or State ADU Law

Accessory Structure

A detached structure located upon the same lot as the building or use to which it is accessory, and the use of which is customarily incidental, appropriate and subordinate to the use of the principal building or to the principal use of the lot. (NCZO Sec. 8102-0 / CZO 8175-5.24.2)

Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)

An attached or a detached residential dwelling unit, or a unit within the existing space of a primary dwelling unit, which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing primary dwelling. It shall include permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation on the same lot as the proposed or existing single-family or multifamily dwelling. (NCZO Sec. 8102-0 / (CZO) Sec. 8172-1)

Efficiency Kitchen

A kitchen that includes a cooking facility with appliances; and a food preparation counter and storage cabinets. (NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.6)

Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU)

A dwelling unit that is no more than 500 sq. ft. in size and contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family dwelling. A JADU may include separate

sanitation facilities, or may share sanitation facilities with the existing structure. (NCZO Sec. 8102-0 / (CZO) Sec. 8172-1)

Lot

An area of real property with fixed boundaries depicted on or described by a final map, parcel map, or instrument of conveyance for the purpose of defining land to be held, actually or potentially, in fee title as a discrete unit; provided that streets, alleys, and similar rights-of-way, whether held in fee or otherwise, are not lots. (NCZO Sec. 8102-0)

Multifamily Structures

For the purposes of State ADU Law, a structure with two or more attached primary dwellings on a single lot is considered a multifamily dwelling. Multiple detached single-family dwellings on the same lot are not considered multifamily dwellings for the purposes of State ADU Law. (HCD 2025 ADU Handbook)

Owner Occupancy

Where the owner of the property may be required to occupy either the remaining portion of the single-family dwelling or the JADU. (NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.7(e)(3))

Public Transit

A location, including, but not limited to, a bus stop or train station, where the public may access buses, trains, subways, and other forms of transportation that charge set fares, run on fixed routes, and are available to the public. (NCZO Sec. 8107-1.7.2 / CZO 8175-5.24.2)

Setbacks

The minimum distance by which structures are to be separated from the boundary lines of the lot on which they are located, in order to provide an open yard area which is unoccupied and unobstructed from the ground upward. (NCZO Sec. 8102-0)

Other Helpful Vocabulary

Conceptual Drawings

Initial drawings of your site and proposed structure, including a floor plan, existing and proposed structures, and other outside features. These drawings help you explore and refine your ADU design.

Construction Documents

Detailed drawings including architectural, mechanical and structural systems, with specifications needed for construction. The project may also require a foundation plan with technical soils engineering report. These documents are submitted as part of the Building Permit application.

Hard Costs

Costs directly related to construction, including labor, materials, and equipment.

Soft Costs

Costs not directly related to construction, including design services, permit fees, and other project-related expenses.

Impact Fees

Impact fees are one-time charges by local governments on property developers for new construction. These fees are designed to recover the costs of expanding public infrastructure and services. Often these are the largest fees for ADUs, but ADUs under 750 sq. ft. are exempt from these.

Plan Check

Multiple departments reviewing your plans for compliance and flag issues.

Public Hearing

A public hearing during a public meeting where elected officials and the public can comment on a proposed project. Not typically needed for ADUs.



COUNTY of VENTURA
Resource Management Agency

