

City of Rancho Cucamonga



RANCHO
CUCAMONGA

Accessory Dwelling Unit Handbook



Source: Bunch ADU

September 2023

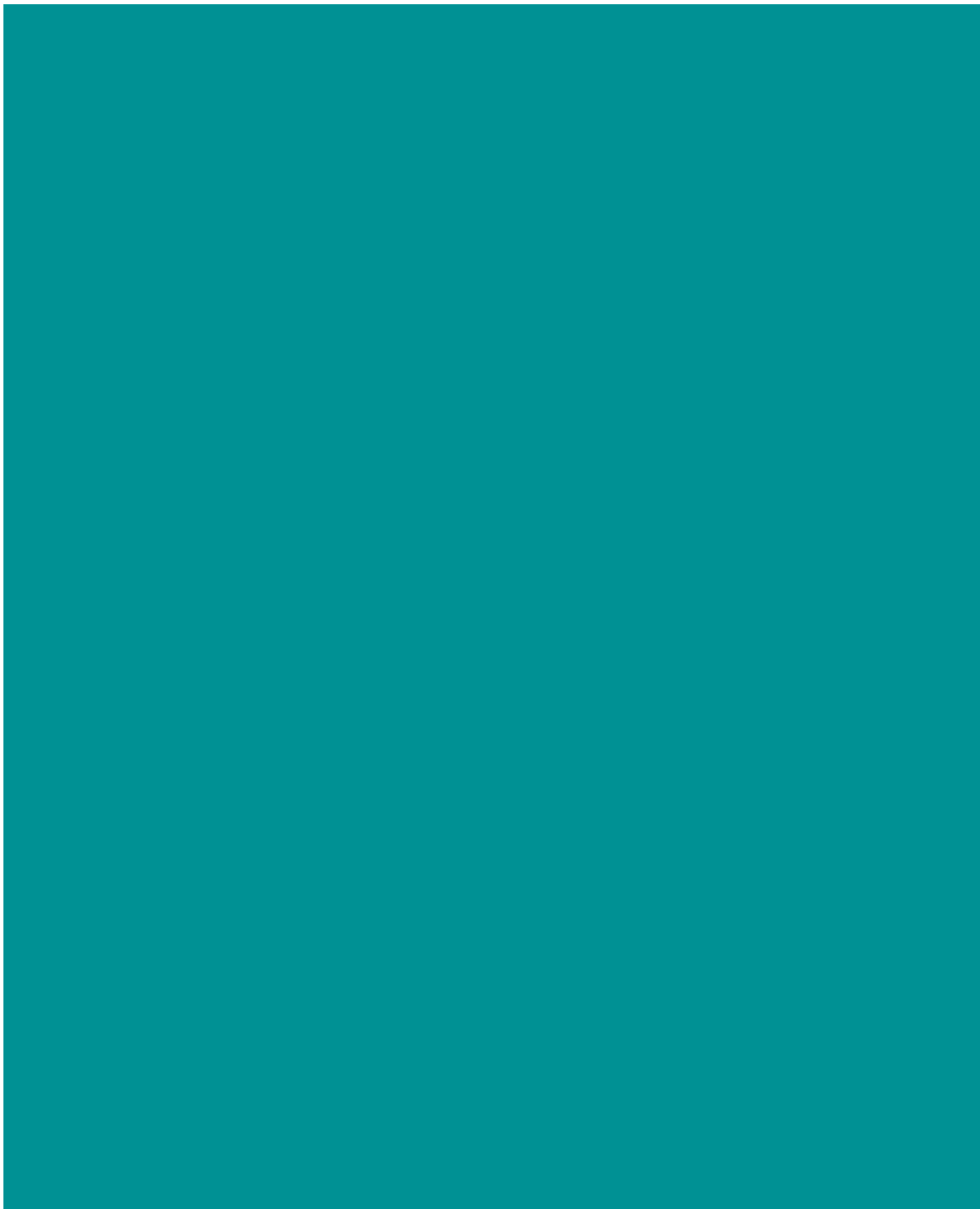


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Overview

The purpose of this handbook is to assist homeowners of the City of Rancho Cucamonga with understanding what an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is and whether one can be built on their property. It provides preliminary answers to key questions and shows the steps the City will require, and what the design and construction of an ADU will entail.

How to Use This Handbook

Use this handbook as a guide to get started and to prepare the basic information you will need to give to the City, your lender, your designer, and your contractor. When you have taken photographs, measured

your backyard, and sketched your idea for an ADU, as this handbook illustrates, you will be well on your way.

There are architects, builders, and planners ready to help you at every stage. If you need additional information or have questions beyond this handbook, please refer to the Permitting Contacts section of this handbook for contact information for the Planning and the Building & Safety Departments. To reference the City's ADU Ordinance, please see [Chapter 17.100](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

Introduction

What Is an ADU?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a residential unit that can be added to a lot with an existing single-family or multi-family dwelling. ADUs can be detached (a separate building in a backyard), attached to or part of the primary residence, or a garage conversion. ADUs are independent housing units that have their own kitchens, bathrooms, living areas, and entrances.

Why Build an ADU?

There are many reasons for building an ADU on your lot. ADUs can provide additional space for renters, grown children, elderly parents, or caregivers. “Empty nesters” can stay in their neighborhood by moving into a smaller ADU and renting their larger existing home for additional income. An ADU can be built to house a relative or caregiver to be near one another while maintaining privacy.

What Is the Law for ADUs in California?

California Government Code Section 65852.150 declares that California is facing a severe housing crisis and ADUs are a valuable form of housing and can play a key role in meeting the housings needs in many communities. The law recognizes that ADUs can provide housing to individuals at an affordable cost within existing neighborhoods without the need

to subdivide land to create new parcels.

In 2017, the State Legislature passed a series of bills that allowed ADUs by-right* and created statewide development standards that regulated size, setbacks†, height, and parking requirements (among other things) for ADUs in all California cities. In 2019, the State Legislature passed another series of bills that refined guidance on ADUs.

The City of Rancho Cucamonga has adopted its own ADU ordinance to comply with all the aspects of the State law to encourage the development of ADUs. To read the ordinance, see [Chapter 17.100](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

** Allowing something 'by-right' means that projects complying with zoning and regulations can be approved without the need for special permits, hearings, or conditions. By-right approvals are processed ministerially, or administratively, meaning without the need for discretionary approval.*

† Minimum required distance from the property line to the structure.



Source: Home Builder Digest

ADU Types

See what type of ADU you want to build and refer to that page to learn more:

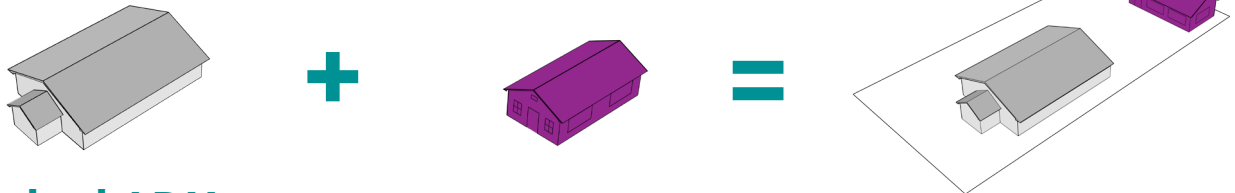
Detached ADU

[See Page 7](#)

I have a single-family house

I want to add an ADU in my backyard and it will not share a wall with the house

The lot with a detached ADU in the backyard:



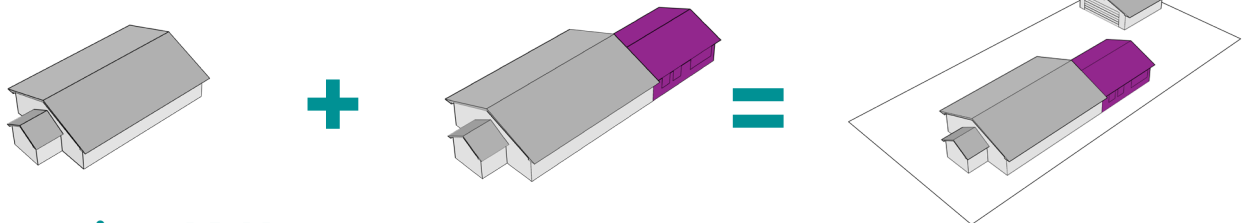
Attached ADU

[See Page 8](#)

I have a single-family house

I want to add an ADU and the unit will share at least one wall with the house

The lot with an ADU attached to the house:



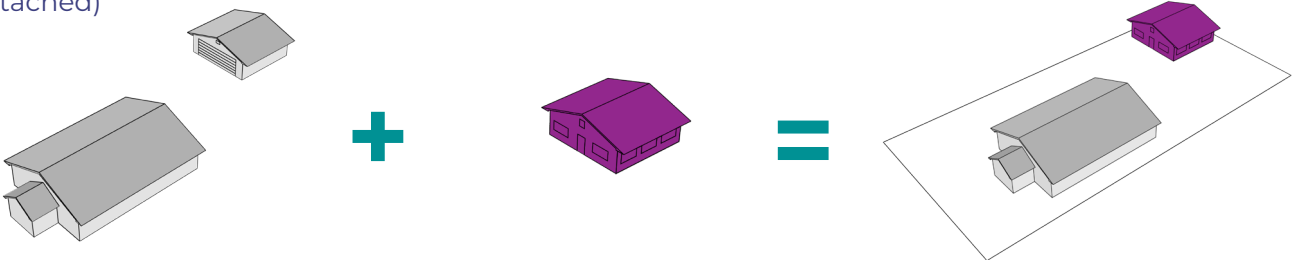
Conversion ADU

[See Page 9](#)

I have a single-family house with a garage (attached or detached)

I would like to convert my garage into an ADU

The lot with a garage converted to an ADU:



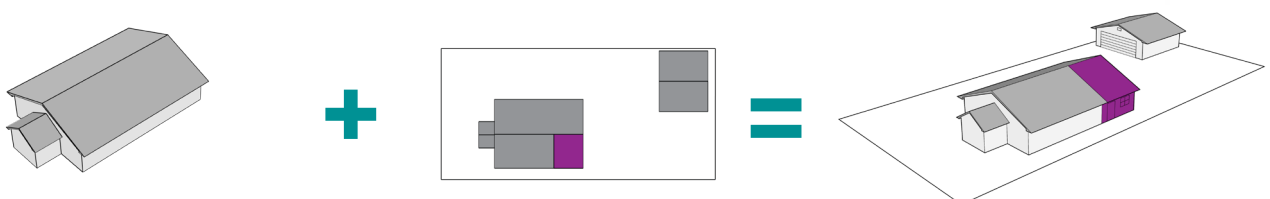
Junior ADU (JADU)

[See Page 10](#)

I have a single-family house

I want to convert a portion of the house into a small ADU

The lot with a JADU:

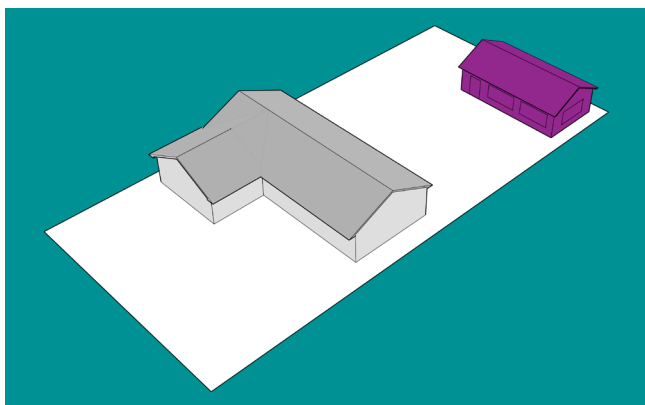
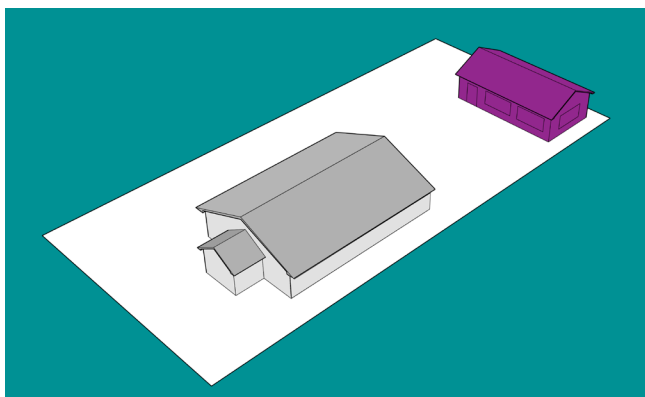


Detached ADU

What It Is

A detached ADU is a physically separated unit from the single-family home or multi-family home. This is the classic ‘backyard home’ that most people are familiar with. This type of ADU is the most flexible and allows for the greatest range of design options, given that it is essentially a new freestanding home. However, it is the most expensive of the ADU type and typically has more complexity during permitting and construction due to factors such as the installation of new water, sewer, and electrical connections to the street and/or overhead power lines.

What It May Look Like



Detached ADU Requirements

Unit Size

Minimum size: 350 square feet.

Maximum size: 1,200 square feet (but it may be limited to 800 square feet to comply with lot coverage requirements).

Height

Maximum Height: 16 feet, unless within 1/2 mile of transit stop, then cannot exceed 18 feet (or 20 feet to match the roof pitch of primary structure). For properties with multi-story, multi-family dwellings, height cannot exceed 18 feet.

Refer to [Section 17.100.050\(G\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

Setback

Minimum 4 foot setback from the side and rear lot lines.

Parking

Minimum 1 parking space, unless the lot is exempt from this requirement.

Refer to [Section 17.100.050\(J\)\(4\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code for Parking exemptions.

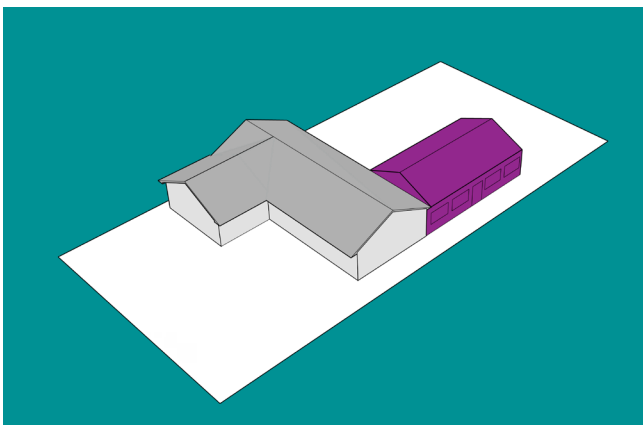
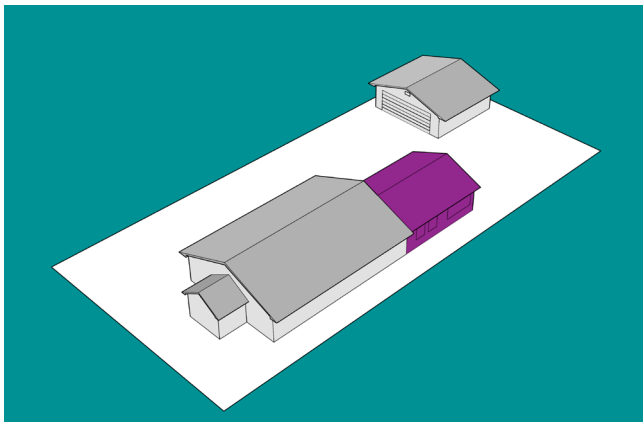


Attached ADU

What It Is

An attached ADU is a unit attached to the primary home. While construction costs are comparable to a detached ADU because it is all new construction, these units typically provide cost savings with utility connections which can be connected directly through the primary residence (versus creation of new water, sewer, and electrical connections to the street and/or overhead power lines). Attached ADUs are also typically limited in size to 50% of the total floor area of the primary residence.

What It May Look Like



Attached ADU Requirements

Unit Size

Minimum size: 220 square feet.

Maximum size: 50% of main dwelling unit or 1,200 square feet, whichever is less.

Height

Cannot exceed the height of the primary structure or 16 feet, whichever is higher. If ADU is constructed above a garage, it cannot exceed the height limits of the underlying zone.

Refer to [Section 17.100.050\(C\)\(2\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

Setback

Minimum 4 foot setback from the side and rear lot lines.

Parking

Not required.

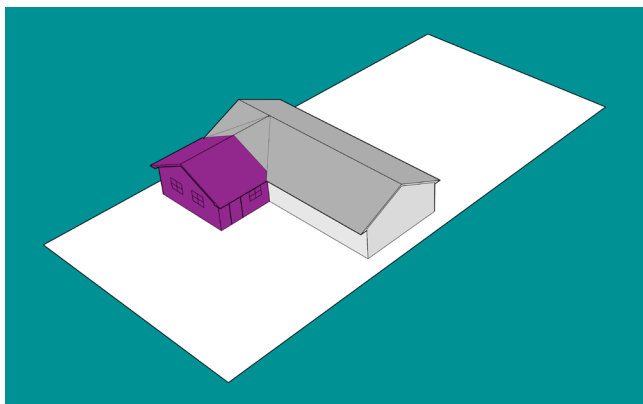
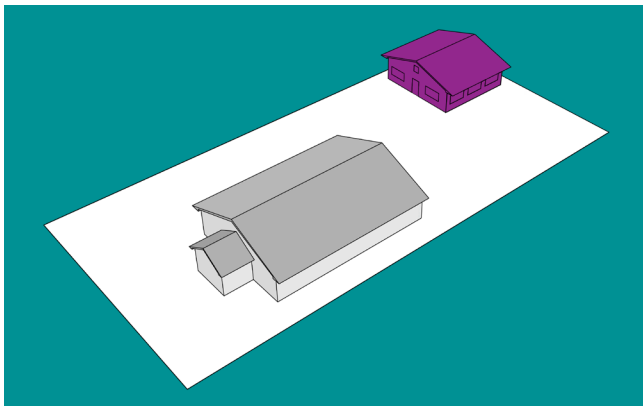


Conversion ADUs

What It Is

A conversion ADU is when existing structure—such as a garage or accessory structure—is converted into an ADU. Conversion ADUs are the most cost-effective approach to designing, permitting, and building an ADU, because homeowners are typically able to use existing foundations, framing, roof systems, and plumbing/electrical systems. Additionally, permitting fees are generally lower. However, the ADU is limited to the size/configuration of the existing structure and therefore design options can be more limited compared to new construction.

What It May Look Like



Conversion ADU Requirements

Unit Size & Height

If detached conversion, see page 7.

If attached conversion, see page 8.

Setback

No change to existing setbacks.

Parking

Not required for garage or carport conversions; may be required for other accessory structures unless exempt.

Refer to [Section 17.100.050\(J\)\(4\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code for Parking exemptions.

Before and After Conversion



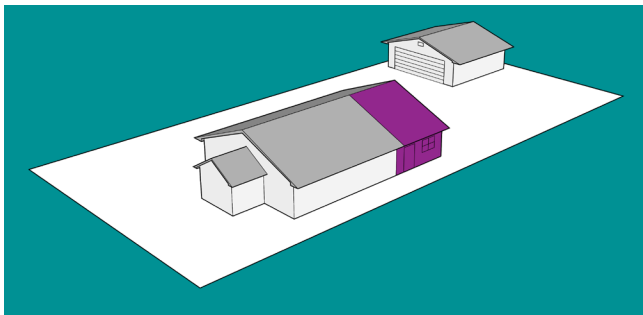
Junior ADUs

What It Is

A Junior ADU (JADU) is a smaller type of ADU which is limited to 500 square feet and must be a conversion of existing space that is contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family residence with a separate entry. Garages and other non-living spaces may be converted to a JADU, if they are attached to the primary residence. JADUs are allowed in addition to ADUs, therefore it is possible to build a total of two additional units on one single-family property.

JADUs are limited to one per lot with a single-family residence. Lots with multiple detached single-family dwellings are not eligible to have JADUs. In addition, JADUs are not allowed within detached ADUs.

What It May Look Like



Source: Maxable

JADU Requirements

Floor Area

Minimum size: 220 square feet.

Maximum size: 500 square feet.

Gross floor area of a shared sanitation facility not included in the maximum floor area of a JADU. Refer to [Section 17.100.050\(D\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

Height

Not applicable as a JADU has to be contained within the walls of existing or proposed single-family home.

Setback

Not applicable.

Parking

Not required.

Sanitation Facilities

May include separate sanitation facilities or share sanitation facilities with the single-family home. If the latter, the JADU shall have an interior door to allow access to the facilities in the single-family home.

ADU Requirements

Construction vs. Prefabricated

Most people automatically think that building an ADU requires new construction (fully constructed on-site), but another option to consider is building a prefabricated or prefab home. A prefab home is a type of home that is built off-site, usually in modules or sections, then shipped to your property location for assembly. Choosing a prefab home may save time and money because most of the work is completed centrally. There are several local companies that specialize in prefab homes (as listed below), but there are many others that offer the same service.

If you decided a prefab home is right for you, below is a list of local companies, with their locations, that you can consider. However, we recommend you do your research and select a company that best suits your needs:

- [Connect Homes](#) - Los Angeles, CA
- [Impresa Modular](#) - various locations
- [Silver Creek](#) - Perris, CA
- [US Modular, Inc.](#) - Calimesa, CA

Whether you choose to construct your ADU or purchase a prefab home, the Development and Design Standards described in the next section apply equally.

The information presented below summarizes additional Development and Design Standards listed in the City of Rancho Cucamonga's ordinance not

previously mentioned. For the full updated list of the City's Development Standards for ADUs, please see [Section 17.100.050](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code. For Design Standards, see [Section 17.100.060](#). If there are any discrepancies between standards found on this Handbook and Rancho Cucamonga's Municipal Code, the standards found in the Municipal Code shall prevail.

Development Standards

Number of ADUs

For single-family dwellings, one ADU and one JADU are permitted. For multi-family dwellings, up to two detached ADUs and at least one interior ADU are permitted (up to 25% of the number of existing units in the multi-family dwelling). Please refer to the California Government Code Section 65852.2 (e).

Facilities

The new ADU is required to have an entrance, a kitchen, and bathroom facilities separate from those of the main dwelling unit.



Utility Services

The new ADU may be metered separately from the main dwelling unit for gas, electricity, communications, water and sewer services.

Fire Sprinklers

New ADUs are not required to provide fire sprinklers if they are not required for the primary residence.

Design Standards

Roof

The color, material, and texture of the roof shall be substantially the same as the main dwelling unit. Note, under certain circumstances, exceptions may be made if the roof color, material, and texture remain consistent with the main property's architectural theme.

Building Walls

The color, material, and texture of all building walls shall be substantially the same as the main dwelling unit. Note, under certain circumstances, exceptions may be made if the building walls color, material, and texture remain consistent with the main property's architectural theme.

Driveways and Walkways

Permitted driveways and walkways shall occupy no more than 50 percent of the front yard area. Refer to [Section 17.56.070](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

Converted or Demolished Parking Structure

When a garage, carport, or covered parking structure is converted or demolished in conjunction with the construction of an ADU, the design shall incorporate features to match the materials, textures, trim, and landscaping of the main dwelling unit.

Exterior Stairs

Cannot be visible from any public right-of-way, excluding alleys or trails.

Parking Requirements

You may need to fit another parking space on your lot, covered or uncovered. New detached ADUs must provide at least one parking space on the property.

You may not need to provide parking if:

- The ADU is within ½ mile walking distance of public transit.
- The ADU is located within a historic district.
- The ADU is part of the existing primary residence or an accessory structure.
- On-street parking permits are required but they are not offered to the occupant of the ADU.
- There is a car share station located within one block of the ADU.
- You are building a JADU.

For more details on ADU parking standards, please see [Section 17.100.050\(J\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

Septic Systems

The Building & Safety Services Department recommends that you obtain approval of your septic system, known as the Onsite Wastewater Treatment System (OWTS), prior to expending funds for a final set of architectural plans for your ADU. The number of bedrooms are used to determine the potential occupancy of a dwelling and therefore the potential amount of wastewater that will be generated.

All ADUs shall have a separate OWTS unless the property does not comply with the sewer connection requirements. The city sewer requirement states that projects located within 300 feet of an existing sewer must install a sewer connection.

For OWTS and Plan Review guideline requirements, please visit the [Building & Safety Guidelines](#) page. Contact the Building & Safety Department for additional information.

Solar Panels

According to California's Title 24, Part 6 of the Building Energy Efficiency Standards, you may be required to install solar panels and infrastructure equivalent to the estimated average electrical use of your ADU. This applies to newly constructed, non-manufactured, detached ADUs. If you have an existing solar system on your primary structure, solar panels could be added to the existing system to meet this

requirement. ADUs exempt from this requirement are attached and conversion ADUs, as well as prefab ADUs. To get the most updated information on the Title 24 solar panels requirement, refer to the [California Energy Commission](#).

Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area

The Wildland-Urban Interface Fire Area (WUIFA) is located on the north side of the City. If you are constructing an ADU in the WUIFA zone, you are required to include a landscaping plan that complies with defensible space provisions. To learn more about this zone and to see if your home is within this zone, you can click on the "Search For My Property" button on City of Rancho Cucamonga's [Wildland Fire Area Info](#) page.



Steps to Build an ADU

Decide and Prepare



1 Take photos
capturing all angles of available space on your lot.



2 Make a sketch
of your lot, location and dimensions of structures.



3 Collect information
to bring to the Planning Division to discuss ADU plans.

Design and Apply for a Building Permit



4 Design ADU & determine costs



5 Finalize construction drawings



6 Submit a permit application & pay fees

Obtain Permit



7 Revise drawings
as required by the City.



8 Building permit issued



9 Obtain bids from contractors

Construct your ADU



10 Select contractor



11 Begin construction



12 Construction inspection



13 Certificate of occupancy



14 Done! Enjoy your ADU!

Process Overview

Pre-Application Phase

Confirm Eligibility and Allowed Size of ADU

- Determine the eligibility of your property and the maximum size ADU you can build. Refer to [Chapter 17.100](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.
- Utilize ADU finance tools (see Resources section) to estimate your costs.
- Call or e-mail the Planning Division (see Permitting Contacts section) to discuss options as well as any constraints or site-specific factors (steep slopes, double frontages, agricultural buffer setbacks, existing accessory structures, septic systems, etc.). This step will help to avoid surprises after investing time and money into a building design.

Design Phase

Design and Preparation

- Decide if you will build a new ADU or convert an existing structure to an ADU. Refer to Resources section for guidance and examples.
- Consider your options for drafting plans such as hiring a designer or architect, drawing your own plans, purchasing plans, or purchasing a prefabricated unit.
- Consider your options for construction. You can hire a General Contractor to manage and complete the construction or obtain an owner/builder permit to allow you to manage and complete the project yourself or through sub-contractors. For information on the responsibilities and risks assumed by owner/builder permit, please visit the [Contractors State License Board website](#). Once you select an ADU design option, you can get an estimate of City fees by looking up the [Development fees](#). You can also see the [Residential Building Plan Check Submittal Guidelines](#) for a list of submittal requirements.

Permitting Phase

Submit Plans for Building Permit

- Depending on the type, size, height of your desired ADU, your Building Permit application may need a plan check/zoning clearance from the Planning Division (please see [Section 17.100.040\(A\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code). Expect a minimum of two rounds of comments and/or re-submittals. Plans are typically reviewed by various agencies, such as Planning, Engineering, Building & Safety, and Fire departments. This process may take several weeks for each round. All applications and plans can be uploaded online via the [Online Permit Center](#).
- A deed restriction must be recorded with the County of San Bernardino prior to the approval of a building permit. The document will be drafted by the assigned Planner and sent to the applicant for a notarized signature by the property owner. The City will then process the recordation with the County. See [Section 17.100.080\(D\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code for details on deed restrictions.

Obtain Permits and Pay Fees

- Obtain your Building Permit and any other necessary permits.
- Pay all fees as required. Fees vary both by size and by method of construction.

Construct & Occupy

Construct Your ADU

- Complete all required inspections at appropriate stages of the construction process.

Occupy Your ADU

- If you want to rent your new ADU, see the Renting my ADU section for more information.

Permitting Contacts

Planning and Economic Development Department (Planning Division) - City of Rancho Cucamonga

✉ Planning@CityofRC.us

☎ 1-909-774-4330

🌐 <https://www.cityofrc.us/community-development/planning>

Building & Safety Department - City of Rancho Cucamonga

✉ EDRnotification@CityofRC.us

☎ 1-909-488-4668

🌐 <https://www.cityofrc.us/community-development/building-safety>

Engineering Department - City of Rancho Cucamonga

✉ Engineering-Info@CityofRC.us

☎ 1-909-477-2740

🌐 <https://www.cityofrc.us/community-development/engineering>

Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Utility

✉ RCMU.customer@CityofRC.us

☎ 1-909-919-2612

🌐 <https://www.cityofrc.us/rcmu>

Southern California Edison

☎ 1-800-655-4555

🌐 <https://www.sce.com/customer-service/contact-us>

Southern California Gas

☎ 1-800-427-2200

🌐 <https://www.socalgas.com/about-us/contact-us>

Cucamonga Valley Water District

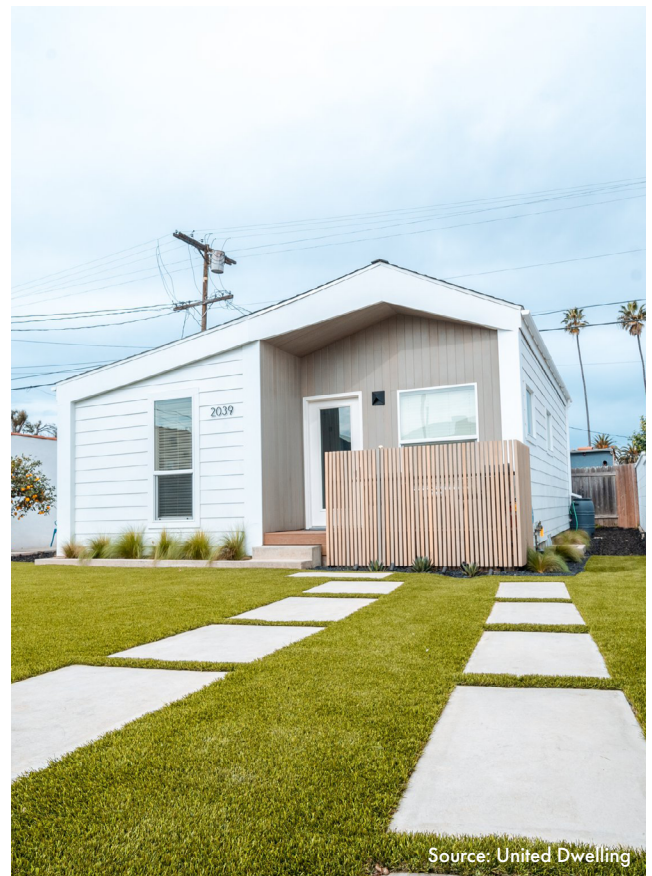
☎ 1-909-944-6000

🌐 <https://www.cvwdwater.com/directory.aspx>

Environmental Health Services - San Bernardino County

☎ 1-800-442-2283

🌐 <https://ehs.sbcounty.gov/contact-us/>



Potential Costs

To determine the costs for constructing your ADU you will need to estimate the costs to obtain a Building Permit (and other necessary permits), costs to design your ADU, hard costs (e.g., building construction, septic upgrade, and site improvements) and soft costs (e.g., design costs and study costs, such as septic analysis). In addition, you will want to also estimate the rental income amount, if you plan to rent your ADU.

We have provided links to useful and free cost estimator tools on the Resources section. Below are some rules of thumb to follow as you calculate ADU costs:

- New construction is typically 125% more expensive than conversions (assuming the structure to be converted is in good physical condition).
- The bigger the ADU, the more expensive—but less expensive on a per square foot basis. In other words, each additional square foot you add has a marginally decreasing cost.
- The higher the quality of the fixtures and finishes, the more expensive the ADU.
- Separately metered utilities (water, electrical, gas) cost more than using existing utility lines and supplemental permits are required.
- Building on slopes or hillsides adds

significant additional cost.

- New detached ADUs are required to have solar systems, which should be considered in overall project costs.

Renting My ADU

Do I want to be a landlord?

Not everyone is ready to be a landlord. With an ADU on your property you can rent your ADU for long-term use but, you cannot rent the ADU as a short-term vacation rental (for a period of less than 30 days). If you plan to rent, it is crucial you understand what your landlord responsibilities will be.

Renting your ADU means you are sharing your property with another household who has tenancy rights, and the right to expect quiet enjoyment of the home for which they are paying rent. Additionally, as a landlord you are subject to all of the same requirements under local, State and federal law, such as non-discrimination and the requirement to give notice of changes to the lease. To learn more about your responsibilities, check out [“A Guide to Residential Tenants’ and Landlords’ Rights and Responsibilities”](#).

Lease Agreements

A legally enforceable lease describes both landlord and tenant expectations. A lease dictates what will make sharing your

property work for you—for example, will you allow your tenant to smoke in the unit? If not, be sure the lease agreement states that very clearly. Will you allow pets? If so, think about the number, type and size that will be acceptable and spell it out in the lease. What are your expectations for guests? Where will the tenant park? You should plan to inspect the unit once a year to be sure everything is in working order, such as the smoke alarm—be sure the lease makes it clear you will do this and how you will give notice to the tenant when you plan to enter the unit.

There are many resources available for landlords and you are encouraged to seek help from organizations that can inform you of the most up-to-date, legally enforceable list of typical lease conditions (some are listed on the Resources section). You can also build and customize your lease for free on various websites including [Zillow Rental Manager](#).

Selecting Tenants

When selecting tenants, landlords must adhere to federal Fair Housing laws that may apply. The State of California Civil Rights Department provides more information on [Housing Discrimination](#). When considering tenant applications, you may encounter potential renters that participate in the Housing Choice Voucher program. This is a program managed by the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), and has

several potential advantages to you as a landlord. You can find more information about this program and how landlords benefit from it at the [Housing Authority of the County of San Bernardino's website](#).

Setting Rent Levels

To determine the “right” rent you should charge for your ADU, start by finding out what the current market is charging. To do so, you can search for “average rent” on the internet and compare similar rental price listings. You can also check [HUD's HOME Rent Limits](#) for your city, which publishes Fair Market Rent every year.

When deciding on how much you will charge to rent your ADU, you may also want to think about how much income you need in order to cover your costs and pay down any debt you acquired.



Source: Abodu

Frequently Asked Questions

Where can I find the most updated information about current rules in Rancho Cucamonga?

[Chapter 17.100 Accessory Dwelling Units \(ADUs\) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Units \(JADUs\)](#) of the Rancho Cucamonga Municipal Code.

Who can I talk to for ADU-related planning questions?

You can contact the City of Rancho Cucamonga's Planning Division. Please see the Permitting Contacts section for contact information.

Can I build more than one ADU?

Yes, single-family properties can have one ADU (attached, detached, or converted) and one JADU. Multi-family properties allow for a maximum of two detached ADUs.

Can I build an ADU in my front yard instead of the backyard?

Yes, only when your backyard does not provide adequate space to build an ADU with minimum 800 square feet and 4-foot setbacks.

My property is on septic. Can I still build an ADU?

Consult with the Building & Safety Department early in the process. Although ADUs are allowed on any parcel with a single-family home, all performance standards for sanitation must be met and approved.

How big can I make my ADU?

The allowable size of an ADU is dependent on the type being proposed. Specifically, whether the ADU is attached to the existing house or detached. If the ADU is attached to the existing house, it cannot be bigger than 50% of the existing house or 1,200 square feet, whichever is less. If the ADU is detached, then it can be no larger than 1,200 square feet in size.

Will adding an ADU raise my property taxes?

ADUs/JADUs will be assessed by San Bernardino County at their current valuation. However, existing square footage which is not touched by the project will not be re-assessed.

Can I sell my ADU separately from my primary unit?

The ADU may not be sold or otherwise conveyed separate from the primary residence.

Do I need to live on the property to build an ADU?

There is no owner-occupancy requirement for an ADU. However, there is an owner-occupancy requirement for a JADU.

Can my ADU be used as a short-term rental?

No. ADUs/JADUs must be rented for a period exceeding 30 days.

Resources

The following are external resources providing additional information to help you navigate the ADU process:

- [HCD ADU Website](#)
Provides links to various resources on ADUs, including an ADU handbook published by the California Housing and Community Development Department.
- [Casita Coalition](#)
Provides guidebooks for homeowners on building and financing an ADU.
- [California Housing Finance Agency](#)
State agency providing opportunities for ADU projects via third-party lending.
- [Maxable](#)
Offers free ADU tools and guides including a cost estimator tool as well as an e-ADU course.
- [Accessory Dwellings](#)
A clearinghouse for ADU trends, data, and best practices.
- [ADU Educational Workshop](#)
Virtual ADU educational workshops, including planning, permitting, building, financing, and property management.
- [Second Unit Inspiration](#)
An idea booklet on ADUs with sample floor plans.
- [Symbium Rancho Cucamonga ADU Information](#)
A free one-stop resource for ADUs in your city to find pertinent information about your property and sketch ADU designs that fit your property.
- [Inland Fair Housing and Mediation Board](#)
Provides information about landlord/tenant rights and responsibilities.
- [Housing Rights Center](#)
A housing non-profit providing training and counseling services for landlords.
- [California Apartment Association - Rental/Lease Agreement Webinar](#)
On-demand class that covers various California laws that regulate landlord/tenant relationships.



