

ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

What is an ADU?

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a self-contained living unit on the same lot as a main dwelling. An ADU is sometimes called a "second unit" or "in-law unit" because it is smaller than and secondary to the primary dwelling on the lot.

An ADU can be detached from or attached to a primary dwelling. You can also create an ADU by converting a garage or existing space in a home into a separate living unit. An ADU generally includes a living and sleeping area, kitchen, and bathroom.

Why build an ADU?

Building an ADU can generate rental income and increase the value of your property. An ADU can also provide a living space for family members, including adult children and seniors wishing to age in place.

Because of their small size, ADUs provide new lower-cost housing options in Benicia. ADUs are a way to build more housing and expand housing choices while also maintaining the existing character of Benicia's residential neighborhoods.

Can I build an ADU on my property?

If you own a single-family home with only one dwelling unit on the lot, you can almost certainly build an ADU. ADUs are allowed in all districts where single-family or multifamily dwellings are permitted, which includes all residential and mixed-use districts. You can add an ADU to a lot with an existing dwelling, or include an ADU in your plans for a proposed new single-family or multifamily dwelling.

There is no minimum lot size for ADUs. The size of your existing home also will not prevent you from adding an ADU – you are guaranteed an ADU up to 800 square feet regardless of the size of your home!

What are Benicia's ADU rules?

Benicia's ADU regulations are in Municipal Code Section 1770.060 (Accessory Dwelling Units). These regulations went into effect on March 6, 2020 and implement new California state law adopted in 2019.

If your ADU complies with Benicia's ADU standards, the City must act on an application for a building permit for the ADU within 60 days of receiving an application. Design Review or a public hearing is not required.

Benicia's ADU regulations specify maximum size, height, setback, and other development standards. ADUs within the Downtown or Arsenal Historic Districts must comply with special design standards. However, certain types of ADUs may be exempt from most development and design standards. Please consult the Planning Division for guidance on which standards apply to your project.



NEED MORE INFORMATION?

Contact the Planning Division at (707) 746-4320 or comdev@ci.benicia.ca.us or visit www.ci.benicia.ca.us/planning

YOUR PATHWAY

to a completed ADU

1

Review ADU Requirements

Review Benicia's accessory dwelling unit regulations (Municipal Code Section 17.70.060). Call, email, or visit the Planning Division to review requirements for your project.

2

Consult a Design and Building Professional

We advise that you hire a designer, licensed architect, or engineer to design the ADU and a licensed contractor to build it. Some companies provide both design and building services or provide prefabricated units.

Planning Division Counter: see www.ci.benicia.ca.us/planning for location and hours

Phone: 707-746-4320

Email: comdev@ci.benicia.ca.us

3

Prepare Building Permit Application

An ADU that complies with standards requires only a building permit. Design Review is not required. Consult the Building Division for application requirements.

Building Division: see www.ci.benicia.ca.us/building for location and hours

Phone: 707-746-4230

Email: comdev@ci.benicia.ca.us

4

Submit Your Application

See www.ci.benicia.ca.us/building for permitting hours.

Bring all required application materials to the Building Division counter and be ready to pay your fees. Make check payable to "City of Benicia" or pay with credit card.

5

Plan Check

The Building Division will review your application materials and may request revisions to your plans. The Planning Division will review conformance with zoning requirements during the building permit plan check process. The same plan check process applies to all types of ADUs that comply with City standards.

6

Permit Issued

After you have adequately responded to plan check comments, your building permit will be issued. The City must act on the building permit within 60 days of receiving a complete application if the ADU conforms to all requirements.

7

Construct the ADU

The ADU you construct must conform to the approved building permit plans.

8

Schedule and Pass Inspections

See www.ci.benicia.ca.us/building, call 707-746-4235 or email building@ci.benicia.ca.us to schedule inspections.

DONE!

Your ADU is ready for occupancy after you've passed final inspection.

