



## Residential Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a separate complete dwelling unit that is either attached to the existing single-family residence, wholly contained within the basement or attic, or in a separate stand-alone structure that is accessory

to the primary use on the premises. Nationwide, ADU's are also commonly referred to as mother-in-law units, backyard cottage homes, granny pads and secondary suites to name a few.

Apply On-Line at [MyBuildingPermit.com](https://www.mybuildingpermit.com)

Select: King County | Building | Single Family Residential | New Construction | Accessory Dwelling Unit



King County recognizes the need for a wide range of housing options in the community, and in many cases properties in King County jurisdiction will be able to meet the development criteria for a separate dwelling space. An ADU will typically contain a kitchen, bedroom, living area, and separate entrance. ADU's function as an independent dwelling space that may be utilized for a long-term rental or to be used for family members. To verify if your property meets the requirements to construct an ADU, please review King County development standards, governed by [KCC Title 21A](#), as follows:

Development Conditions, per KCC Title 21A.08.030 B.7. a.:

1. Only one accessory dwelling per primary single detached dwelling or townhouse unit.
2. Only allowed in the same building as the primary dwelling unit, except that detached accessory dwelling units are allowed when there is no more than one primary dwelling unit on the lot, and the following conditions are met:
  - (a) the lot must be three thousand two hundred square feet or greater if located in the urban area or a rural town; or
  - (b) the lot must meet the minimum lot area for the applicable zone if located in the rural area but not in a rural town, except that if one transferable development right is purchased from the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands under K.C.C. chapter 21A.37, a detached accessory dwelling unit is allowed on a RA-5 zoned lot that is two and one-half acres or greater.
3. The accessory dwelling unit shall not exceed one thousand square feet of heated floor area and one thousand square feet of unheated floor area except:
  - (a) when the accessory dwelling unit is wholly contained within a basement or attic, this limitation does not apply
  - (b) for detached accessory dwelling units, the floor area contained in a basement does

## Residential Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), continued

not count toward the floor area maximum; or

(c) on a site zoned RA if one transferable development right is purchased from the Rural Area or Natural Resource Lands under K.C.C. chapter 21A.37, the accessory dwelling unit is permitted a maximum heated floor area of one thousand five hundred square feet and one thousand five-hundred square feet of unheated floor area.

4. Accessory dwelling units that are not wholly contained within an existing dwelling unit shall not exceed the base height established in 21A.12.030.
5. When the primary and accessory dwelling units are in the same building, or in multiple buildings connected by a breezeway or other structure, only one entrance may front a street.
6. No additional off-street parking spaces are required for accessory dwelling units.
7. The primary dwelling unit or the accessory dwelling unit shall be occupied either by the owner of the primary dwelling unit or by an immediate family member of the owner. Immediate family members are limited to spouses, siblings, parents, grandparents, children, and grandchildren, either by blood, adoption, or marriage, of the owner. The accessory dwelling unit shall be converted to another permitted use or shall be removed if neither dwelling unit is occupied by the owner or an immediate family member.
8. An applicant seeking to build an accessory dwelling unit shall file a notice approved by the department of executive services, records, and licensing services division, that identifies the dwelling unit as accessory. The notice shall run with the land. The applicant shall submit proof that the notice was filed before the department approves any permit for the construction of the accessory dwelling unit. The required contents and form of the notice shall be set forth in administrative rules.
9. Accessory dwelling units are not allowed in the F zone.
10. Accessory dwelling units should be designed to be compatible with the primary dwelling unit and the surrounding properties, including material, colors and building forms; and
11. The applicant should consider a siting alternatives study that analyzes placement options of the accessory dwelling unit on the property to minimize impacts to privacy and views for surrounding property owners.

### Additional Permit Requirements

The construction of an ADU may require public health approval and/or a sewer certificate, which will be reviewed in the same manner as any residential dwelling structure. Please review the link pertaining to [On-Site Sewage System \(OSS\)](#).

# Residential Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), continued

## Additional Information or Questions

- Find available customer service options on our website: King County [Department of Local Services, Permitting Division](#)

## Additional Resources

- [Property Research Guide](#) and [Property Research and Maps](#)
- [Residential, New Single Family Construction Packet](#)
- [Permit Fees](#)
- [Accessory Dwelling Units: Notice on Title Requirements and Affidavit](#)
- [King County Code](#)