



COUNTY OF HUMBOLDT
PLANNING AND BUILDING DEPARTMENT
HOUSING PROGRAMS

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Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) & Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) Fact Sheet



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

ADUs are independent residential units located on the same property as a primary residence. They can be detached, attached, or converted spaces like garages.

Permits: ADUs generally require permits, including Coastal Development Permits (CDPs) in coastal zones.

Size: ADUs can range from small studios no smaller than 200 square feet to homes up to 1,200 square feet max. Exterior height may not exceed 16 feet.

Setbacks: Property setbacks are required for both attached, semi-detached and standalone units at 4 feet from all property lines.

Energy Requirements: Detached ADUs must include a solar system to offset energy demands, with limited exceptions.

Short-Term Rentals: Short-term rentals are not allowed in ADUs.

Plans: ADUs must contain complete independent living spaces with sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation facilities. Humboldt County offers free pre-approved ADU designs to simplify the construction process.

Location: ADUs must be placed or constructed on the same lot as an existing or proposed single-family dwelling. Only one ADU per legal parcel is allowed unless the principle unit is a multi-family dwelling. Multi-Family units may have two ADUs on the same legal parcel.

Junior Accessory Dwelling Units (JADUs)

JADUs are smaller units (up to 1500 square feet) constructed WITHIN the primary residence, such as in basements, attics, secondary suites or garages.

Permits: JADUs may require permits, including CDPs in certain areas.

Features: JADUs must include complete independent living facilities including sleeping, eating and cooking, but may share sanitation infrastructure and laundry facilities within the primary residence.

JADUs MUST have a SEPARATE, private entrance.

Short-Term Rentals: Short-term rentals are not allowed for JADUs.

Location: JADUs must be constructed inside the primary residence. A JADU is allowed along with a detached ADU. Only one of each is allowed on any single owner-occupied legal parcel.

Size: Minimum 150 square feet, 1,200 square feet max. 150 square foot additions are allowed for creating a required private entrance.

State and County Requirements: ADU's and JADU's must:

- Be principally permitted in areas zoned single-family or multifamily
- NOT be sold separately from the primary dwelling unit
- NOT be subordinate to the principal dwelling
- Have the owner occupying the principle residence on the parcel
- Require leases longer than 60 days
- Have separate or shared gas and water meters
- Provide one parking space per bedroom
- NOT exist in Density Bonus Areas and certain zones