



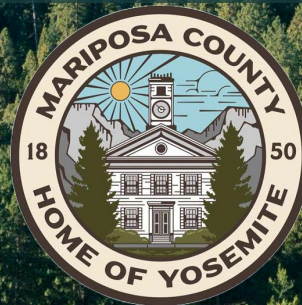
# ADU Guidebook

Project Overview with Community Planning Collaborative  
October 2023



# About Mother Lode ADU

- A four-County partnership providing free resources to help homeowners build ADUs
- Funding provided by Housing and Community Development's Regional Early Action Planning (REAP) Funds (California Senate Bill 2)





## Why ADUs?

- Housing for families
- Aging-in-place
- Multigenerational living
- Housing for local workers
- Extra income
- Improved property values
- Reduced commutes for workers and small -scale living support environment



# Guidebook Benefits

- Saves money and time
- Resources for residents = less staff time answering the same questions, complete apps, happier people
- Resources for staff = aligned info at the counter and across departments
- More ADUs built and RHNA credit
- Customized, easy to update handouts
- Helpful for all residential construction projects

# How we built Mother Lode ADU



**Survey**



**Discovery &  
Web Audits**



**Interviews with  
Staff & Local  
Professionals**



**Staff Review**



**Public  
Comment**

# NEW Mother Lode ADU Resources

## Guidebook

## Website

NEVADA COUNTY  
**ADU Guidebook**

MOTHER LODE ADU

COUNTY OF NEVADA  
CALIFORNIA

[motherlodeadu.org](http://motherlodeadu.org)

**A COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUILDING AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT**

GETTING STARTED | LEARNING THE RULES | BUDGETING | DESIGN | PERMITTING | CONSTRUCTION | MOVE-IN

WELCOME TO MOTHER LODE ADU  
**Nevada County**

This guide was created as a resource to help residents of Nevada County through the entire process of building an accessory dwelling unit (ADU)—also known as granny flats, backyard

ADU 101 | ADU Stories | Resources | About | Plans Gallery | Contact

Get Started > Learn the Rules > Budget > Design > Permit > Build > Rent

AMADOR COUNTY • CALAVERAS COUNTY • MARIPOSA COUNTY • NEVADA COUNTY

**Invest in your family and community  
by building an ADU**

AMADOR • CALAVERAS • NEVADA • MARIPOSA  
**ADU Guidebook**

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO BUILDING AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT  
[motherlodeadu.org](http://motherlodeadu.org)

**DOWNLOAD THE GUIDEBOOK**

**MOTHER LODE ADU** is here to guide you on your accessory dwelling unit journey, no matter where you are in the process. Download our free Guidebook to learn more.

**QUICKLINKS**

- GUIDEBOOK & EXERCISES
- ADU CALCULATOR
- PLANS GALLERY
- COUNTY ADU RULES
- GLOSSARY
- FAQS








Nevada County

**Mother Lode ADU will guide you on your journey.**

Mother Lode ADU is a new partnership between Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Nevada counties created to help homeowners in our region build an ADU.

# Guidebook Content & Features

## Content & Features

 <b>1 Getting Started</b>	<b>9</b>
 <b>2 Learning the Rules</b>	<b>17</b>
 <b>3 Budgeting &amp; Finance</b>	<b>27</b>
 <b>4 Design</b>	<b>33</b>
 <b>5 Permitting</b>	<b>49</b>
 <b>6 Construction</b>	<b>59</b>
 <b>BONUS Move-In &amp; Renting Your ADU</b>	<b>65</b>



### INTRODUCTION

ADU 101	4
PROCESS AT-A-GLANCE	8



### REFERENCES

GLOSSARY	82
DIRECTORY	83
URL DIRECTORY	85
PHOTO SOURCES	87



### EXERCISES 70

This guidebook includes exercises to help you plan your ADU project. See the final pages of this Guidebook or download a separate PDF using the QR code.



#### GETTING STARTED

- Identifying Goals & Concerns
- Recording Your ADU Goals
- Making a Rough Property Sketch

#### LEARNING THE RULES

- Property Details Worksheet
- Staff Meeting Worksheet

#### BUDGETING & FINANCE

- Budgeting Exercise

#### DESIGN

- Initial Design Exercise
- Design Ideas Exercise
- Designer Considerations Exercise

#### PERMITTING

- Staff Meeting Worksheet

#### MOVE-IN

- What You Want in a Lease



### Frequently Asked Questions

How long does it take?	7
How do I get started?	10
Am I allowed to build an ADU?	20
What will it cost?	26
How will it affect my taxes?	32
How do I find an architect/designer?	42
How do I select a contractor?	60
What is involved in being a landlord?	66



### ADU STORIES



**GAIL**  
Stability for Local Workers



**RICHARD**  
Flexible Housing for Family



**SUE**  
A Perfect Place for Mom



**ROSEMARY**  
Confidence from Extra Income

# Exercises

## ADU Exercises

These exercises are also available as a separate PDF at [motherlodeadu.org/guidebook](https://motherlodeadu.org/guidebook).

### Contents

- Identifying Goals & Concerns
- Recording Your ADU Goals
- Making a Rough Sketch of Your Property
- Property Details Worksheet
- Staff Meeting Worksheet
- Budgeting Exercise
- Initial Design Exercise
- Design Ideas Exercise
- Designer Considerations Exercise
- Identifying What You Want in a Lease



### Identifying Goals & Concerns

	Goals	Short-term	Long-term	Concerns	Short-term	Long-term
	Rental income	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Cost	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Housing for a family member	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hiring/managing contractors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Helping out the community (e.g., housing a teacher)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Privacy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Housing for someone with special needs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Site constraints	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Planning for retirement	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Challenges of renting and managing the ADU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Increased resale value	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Conflict with neighbors	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Downsizing/moving into the ADU	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting approval/scrutiny from government	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Housing domestic help (e.g., an au pair)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Help with chores or to watch over things when you are away	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			
	Housing an in-home caregiver	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			



### Recording Your ADU Goals

To stay motivated through challenges in the process, some people find it helpful to write down what building their ADU will allow them to do. Use this space to express your goals – consider cutting it out and putting it somewhere you'll see it regularly. Examples: "Take the kids to Disneyland every year." "Make sure my mom has a safe place to live."

### QUESTIONS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

1. Are there any soil testing requirements for my property?
2. Are there any special septic or well requirements for my property?

### QUESTIONS FOR BUILDING

1. How long does permitting take? When should I check in if I haven't heard anything? How do I do that?
4. Do you have official record of my existing floor area? What areas should I count when determining existing size?

2. Can you explain all the fees I'll be expected to pay as part of permitting?
5. Are there fire safety or sprinkler regulations I should know?

3. Are there common pitfalls or mistakes to watch out for in the design, application, or construction process?
6. When should I start talking to utility companies about requirements?



# Accessory Dwelling Unit Cost Calculator

## Accessory Dwelling Unit Calculator



Estimate the cost of converting part of your home or constructing a rental unit.

Save/Load My Settings

English



### Physical Characteristics

Where will your second unit be built?

Select City



### Type of Construction



#### New Construction

New construction includes both attached and detached second units.



#### Conversion of Part of Garage or Pool House

Taking an existing garage or pool house, and turning it into a second unit.



Results are available after answers are completed

Monthly Rent

\$---

Monthly Expenses

\$---

● \$--- Loan Payment

# ADU Spotlight Stories



ADU STORY

## Rosemary

NEVADA CITY

### Confidence from Extra Income



HOME » STORIES » ROSEMARY



"The rental income gives us flexibility, and I have more confidence in my finances and my family's long term stability."

#### DETAILS

ADU TYPE	Detached
LAYOUT	One bedroom
SIZE	1,000 square feet
YEAR BUILT	2022

TIMELINE

English

Español (Spanish)

# Floorplans Inspiration



[ADU 101](#)

[ADU Stories](#)

[▼ Resources](#)

[About](#)

[Plans Gallery](#)

[Contact](#)



[Get Started](#) > [Learn the Rules](#) > [Budget](#) > [Design](#) > [Permit](#) > [Build](#) > [Rent](#)

[HOME](#) » [RESOURCES](#) » [FLOORPLANS INSPIRATION](#)

## ADU Floorplans Inspiration

REAL ADUS BUILT THROUGHOUT CALIFORNIA

**Note that some of these may not meet your County ADU rules**, but all of them provide valuable inspiration and insight into how others have designed their ADUs for features like storage, washer/dryer location, and more.



280 SF, DETACHED 1-BEDROOM



300 SF, DETACHED STUDIO



400 SF, DET

[English](#) [Español \(Spanish\)](#)



# Mother Lode ADU Handouts

## Tri-Fold

### Pro Tips from Local Professionals

Realtors and staff across the region talk to folks every day who are considering building a new or permitting an existing ADU. Here are some things they have learned:

#### ADU TIPS FROM A REALTOR

- 1 Having an ADU is always a benefit.
- 2 Laws and Incentives support ADUs.
- 3 Existing structures like garages and barns can be turned into ADUs.
- 4 Local staff are here to help.
- 5 Prefab is a great option.

See the details at [motherlodeadu.org/realtor-tips](https://motherlodeadu.org/realtor-tips)



### TIPS ON LEGALIZING AN UNPERMITTED ADU

- 1 Talk to local staff.
- 2 Consider hiring a professional.
- 3 Build a budget and be strategic.
- 4 Gather documentation.
- 5 Prepare for a marathon, not a sprint.
- 6 An unpermitted ADU can be more expensive than bringing it up to code.

See the details at [motherlodeadu.org/code-tips](https://motherlodeadu.org/code-tips)



MOTHER LODE ADU



SCAN ME!

### Mother Lode ADU Online

Step-by-step guidance · Tools and resources  
Stories about local ADUs · Floorplans Inspiration  
Showcased prefab ADUs · and MUCH MORE!

[motherlodeadu.org](https://motherlodeadu.org)



### Questions? Need help with an ADU?

Staff are here to help you. Contact them with your questions, wherever you are in the process. Use the information below or visit [motherlodeadu.org/contact](https://motherlodeadu.org/contact) for more contact information.

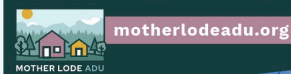
**AMADOR COUNTY**  
209-223-6422  
building@amadorgov.org  
810 Court Street, Jackson

**CALAVERAS COUNTY**  
209-754-6390  
buildingweb@co.calaveras.ca.us  
891 Mountain Ranch Road, San Andreas

**MARIPOSA COUNTY**  
209-966-5151  
planningdept@mariposacounty.org  
5100 Bullion Street #1, Mariposa

**NEVADA COUNTY**  
530-265-1222 ext. 2  
planning@nevadacounty.gov  
950 Maidu Avenue, Suite 170, Nevada City

### Invest in your family and community by building an ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)



From space for your loved ones to rental income for your retirement, an ADU will grow with you and your family over time.

Mother Lode ADU, a new partnership between the Counties of Amador, Calaveras, Mariposa, and Nevada, offers resources to help you build an ADU.

### Why Build an ADU?

- HOUSING FRIENDS & FAMILY
- RENTAL INCOME
- A HOME AS YOU AGE
- PROPERTY VALUE
- SAFETY
- LOCAL SUPPORT

### What is an ADU?

Also known as “backyard cottages” or “granny flats,” ADUs come in many shapes and sizes but are always:

- ☑ A self-contained home
- ☑ Legally part of the same property
- ☑ A unit with a kitchen and bathroom

They can range from small studios to more than 1,000 square feet with multiple bedrooms.

### ADU Types



**DETACHED** New freestanding structure separate from the main home, like a backyard cottage



**ATTACHED** New structure (may include some converted space) sharing at least one wall with the main home



**CONVERSION** Converted existing space in the main home or on the property (bedroom, basement, detached garage)

### SHORT-TERM RENTALS

ADUs and JADUs must be rented for 30 days or more – no short-term rentals like Airbnb are allowed (with some exceptions).



### WHAT'S A JADU?

A Junior ADU (JADU) is a smaller conversion ADU within the main house or attached garage.

- ☑ Up to 500 square feet
- ☑ Efficiency or full kitchen
- ☑ Can share bathroom with main house
- ☑ Owner must live on the property



**WHAT'S NOT AN ADU?** RVs, tiny homes on wheels, yurts, and storage structures are usually not considered ADUs.

### MULTI-FAMILY

ADUs can also be added to properties with duplexes, triplexes, and apartment buildings.

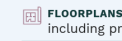


**Getting Started**  
Building an ADU can be overwhelming. Our resources are here to help.

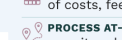


**ADU GUIDEBOOK** Download our step-by-step guide for your county.

[motherlodeadu.org/guidebook](https://motherlodeadu.org/guidebook)



**FLOORPLANS** Look at example floorplans including prefab ADUs.



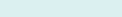
**ADU PLANS GALLERY** View and compare existing plans to jump start your design.



**ADU CALCULATOR** Get a rough estimate of costs, fees and rents.



**PROCESS AT-A-GLANCE** Learn about the permit and build process for your County.



**CAN I BUILD TOOL** See what you can build on your property.



**COUNTY ADU RULES** Find out the ADU rules for your County before you begin.



**ADU DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST** Use to prepare for your application.

See all resources at [motherlodeadu.org](https://motherlodeadu.org)



**NEED FUNDING?** The Cal HFA ADU Program offers up to \$40k for qualified homeowners to develop an ADU. Visit [cathfa.ca.gov/adu](https://cathfa.ca.gov/adu).

### An Investment in Your Future

It's important to create a project budget early on. Use the ADU Calculator to estimate project costs and possible rental income.

[motherlodeadu.org/calculator](https://motherlodeadu.org/calculator)



Regardless of your project budget, an ADU is a great investment for your property and family. The extra space gives homeowners lots of flexibility over the years, and rental income and increased property value puts cash back in your pocket.

### Mother Lode ADU Plans Gallery

Jump start your design by visiting our Plans Gallery to view and compare dozens of ready-made designs and connect directly with the designer.



All plans need some customization for local rules and your property, but can still save you time & money.

[motherlodeadu.org/plans](https://motherlodeadu.org/plans)



# Questions?

[motherlodeadu.org](https://motherlodeadu.org)