

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)

Small Housing Units That Make a Big Impact on Housing Affordability



Photo: Pearl Modeling, Reseda, CA. Used with permission.

BENEFITS OF ADUs

Accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are secondary units on lots that have a principal dwelling unit. ADUs offer a variety of benefits, both for housing affordability and for households with specific lifestyle preferences. ADUs provide a potential source of income for the homeowners who build them while they also generally rent for less than apartments in the same neighborhood. ADUs allow for intergenerational living. They are often housing for seniors at their adult children's homes, sometimes providing an opportunity for grandparents to care for their grandchildren.

3 Rules for ADU Legislation

There are three common pitfalls that hurt the effectiveness of ADU laws. (1) Owner occupancy requirements can discourage homeowners from building them because if they decide to move, they may not be able to profit from their investment. (2) Parking requirements can make it impossible to build ADUs in areas where space is limited. (3) Requiring a public hearing to receive an ADU permit can turn off homeowners who prefer the certainty of receiving a permit from their planning department to a potentially contentious hearing.