

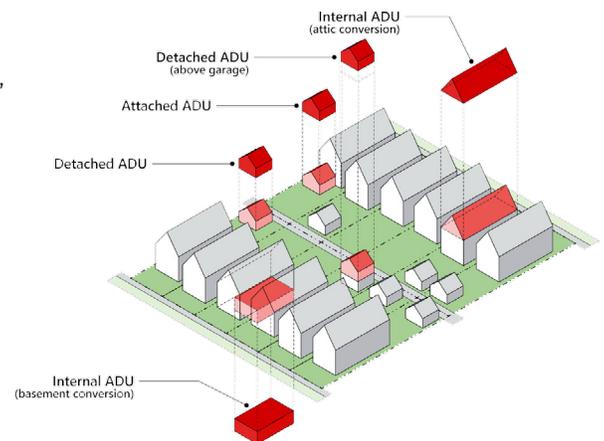
ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

An accessory dwelling unit (ADU) is a residential living unit on the same lot as a single-family dwelling that provides independent living facilities for one or more people, including provisions for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. ADUs can be contained within or attached to the principal dwelling unit or detached in a standalone structure.

ADUs have many names, including in-law apartments, granny flats, secondary suites, carriage houses, and accessory apartments. No matter the name, ADUs are “accessory” because they share the feature of being additional living quarters built on the same lot as a single-family home.

What are the benefits of ADUs?

Homeowners choose to build ADUs for many reasons. The most powerful advantage of ADUs is what they offer to homeowners and their families.



FAMILY & SUPPORT

- **Aging in place with dignity**—Seniors remain independent while staying close to family and care.
- **On-site caregivers & disability support**—Safe, nearby housing that preserves privacy while keeping help within reach.
- **Intergenerational living**—Grandparents, parents, and adult children live independently but connected.

FINANCIAL & PRACTICAL BENEFITS

- **Income potential**—Homeowners can rent the ADU or main home to create financial stability.
- **Lower living costs**—Reduced rent, commuting, and shared property expenses.
- **Flexible housing for changing life stages**—Adaptable space for downsizing, launching careers, or caregiving.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

- **Gentle density**—Efficient use of existing residential land without altering neighborhood character.
- **Right-sized homes**—Smaller homes for smaller households that reflect today’s needs.

NH's ADU Law and the Role of Local Government

New Hampshire law (RSA 674:71-73) requires every municipality to allow at least one attached or detached ADU wherever single-family homes are permitted without having to justify the project to the local planning or zoning board.

Municipalities may limit ADUs to no greater than 750 square feet and prohibit more than one ADU per property. Municipalities may also allow the sale of an ADU as a condominium and permit ADUs on properties where the owner is not a permanent resident, including multifamily rental properties.

THE STATE LAW ALLOWS HOMEOWNERS TO:

- Build an attached or detached ADU
- Build a studio, one-bedroom, or two-bedroom ADU up to at least 750 square feet
- Convert an existing structure to an ADU
- Decide who lives in the ADU
- Build only one additional parking space for the ADU



Where Should I Start?

Homeowners interested in building an ADU should start by talking with someone in their town's planning department, which can explain local requirements and permitting steps.



Whether you're a homeowner interested in building an ADU, a housing advocate who wants to learn more, or a municipal staffer looking for guidance on the ADU law, find more resources at nhhousing.org

