NEW HAMPSHIRE HOUSING

MARCH 2026

A GUIDE FOR NH HOMEOWNERS

# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

Prepared by Southern New Hampshire Planning Commission on Behalf of New Hampshire Housing

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# WHAT IS AN ADU?

An Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is a smaller home that is located on the same property as a main home. An ADU includes sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation facilities that are independent of the main home. ADUs can be added to an existing home or built in a separate building in the yard. ADUs can serve family members, renters, or future needs.


# QUICK START

## HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Considering an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) for your property? This guide walks you through the process.

### SEE IF AN ADU FITS YOUR LIFE

Turn to Is an ADU Right for You? for practical questions about cost, design, and use. Whether you're housing an aging parent, creating rental income, or planning ahead, this section helps you match your goals to an ADU type and budget.

### LEARN THE GROUND RULES

Every New Hampshire community permits some form of ADU, but the rules vary by town. The ADU Regulations section explains what state law allows and what towns may regulate, including size limits, setbacks, and design details.

### TAKE THE NEXT STEP

The ADU Resources section connects you with professionals and planning tools. A step-by-step outline helps you move from ideas to action.

### GET INSPIRED

Hear from New Hampshire homeowners who turned garages, basements, and backyards into beautiful, functional ADUs, and see how they worked through challenges along the way.

# IS AN ADU FOR ME?

## WHAT IS AN ADU?
## *THE MANY NAMES OF ADUS*

Whether you want more independence, to help a family member live nearby, or to make better use of your property, an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) might be the answer.

ADUs are also called in-law apartments, backyard cottages, granny flats, and other terms. Regardless of the name, an ADU is an independent living unit on the same property as a primary home.

**Common ADU Terms**

- In-law Suites
- Mother-in-law Suites
- Granny Flats
- Secondary Suites
- Carriage Houses
- Garage Apartments
- Basement Apartments
- Coach Houses
- Accessory Apartments

## DECIDE IF AN ADU IS THE RIGHT FIT

Building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) is exciting—and a major investment. It's important to consider how an ADU might fit into your life, property, and long-term plans. Then, think through your motivations, budget, design options, and approval processes so your ADU meets your needs now and in the future.

### CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

**Long-Term Plans**
Start with purpose. The clearer your purpose, the more tailored your design, financing, and approvals can be. Write down your primary and secondary goals for an ADU. Ask what you need most from your property over the next five, 10, or 20 years.

**Family Connection**
Do you want to keep aging parents close while maintaining their independence? An ADU can be a comfortable, accessible home for a loved one that is just steps away when help or companionship is needed.

**Financial Stability**
Are you seeking additional income to help cover your mortgage, taxes, or retirement expenses? Renting an ADU can provide a dependable stream of revenue. Even modest rent can significantly improve monthly affordability.

**Housing Flexibility**
Is your household changing? Perhaps a child is returning home, or you need a home office as you shift careers. An ADU adds flexibility to adapt to life's transitions.

**Aging in Place**
Do you hope to stay in your neighborhood as you age? A small, single-level ADU can become your future home while your main house generates rental income or accommodates your family's housing needs.

## HOW MUCH DOES BUILDING AN ADU COST?

Costs vary by size, location, and construction type. The typical construction costs listed below do not include any special site conditions or major utility upgrades, which can vary.

Add local permitting fees, design costs, and contingencies — they're usually 10–20% of the total project budget.

| ADU Type | Typical Size | Approx. Cost | Est. Total Cost | Notes |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Interior Conversion (basement, attic)** | 400–800 sf | $150–$300/sf | $75k–$165k | Least expensive; uses existing structure |
| **Attached addition** | 500–900 sf | $250–$400/sf | $200k–$350k | Shares walls/utilities with main house |
| **Detached ADU (backyard cottage)** | 600–1,000 sf | $300–$600/sf | $200k–$400k | More privacy; requires full systems. |
| **Prefab/modular unit** | 400–800 sf | $185–$350/sf | $185k–$300k | Faster build, limited customization |

## HOW TO PAY

Building an ADU can be a smart investment, but it requires upfront capital. Because ADUs are smaller and built on land you already own, they often cost less than buying or building a separate home. A typical project costs $150,000 to $350,000, depending on its size and type.

Most homeowners combine financing tools to pay for an ADU. The best mix depends on your home equity, income, and timeline.

## COMMON FINANCING TOOLS

**Home Equity Loans or HELOCs**
Often the simplest route, you borrow against a home's existing value, either as a one-time loan or a flexible line of credit. It's well-suited for modest ADUs, such as basement or garage conversions.

**Cash-Out Refinance Loans**
If you have significant home equity, you can fund a full addition or a detached cottage by refinancing your primary mortgage or taking a short-term construction loan. Some New Hampshire lenders consider projected rental income from an ADU when assessing loan eligibility.

**Family Cost-Sharing**
Many families build ADUs together. Adult children help fund a suite for parents, or parents invest in a home for their kids. Shared financing keeps costs manageable and strengthens intergenerational ties.

**Savings or Retirement Funds**
Some homeowners draw on personal savings or retirement funds to invest in an ADU that reduces future housing or care costs. Many use the cash proceeds of the sale of a home to cover the cost of an ADU.

When deciding how to finance an ADU, consider what it returns: rental income, shared-living savings, or avoided costs such as assisted living services. (See "Secure Financing," pages 18 & 19, for more information.)

# ADU DESIGN: MATCHING YOUR GOALS TO THE PROPERTY

Consider use, size, and type when designing an ADU

## WHO WILL OCCUPY THE ADU?

An ADU's layout, accessibility, and privacy features should align with the needs of its intended occupants. Consider these common scenarios:

**The Caregiver Suite**

- Prioritize safety, visibility, and ease of movement for an aging parent or caregiver. Consider a single-level unit without steps, a full bathroom with grab bars, and proximity to the main house.

**The Boomerang Child**

- Provide independence and privacy for an adult child returning home. Include a separate entrance, sound insulation, and a kitchenette with shared laundry.

**The Downsizer**

- Provide flexibility for aging owners moving into an ADU while renting their main home. Focus on a compact, well-lit layout with storage, minimal stairs, and energy-efficient features.

**The Remote Professional**

- Support professional and personal needs with flexible layouts. Create a clearly defined workspace with natural light, sound separation, and strong internet connectivity.

**The Community Host**

- Prioritize privacy between the ADU and primary home for short-term rentals. These units are typically smaller, fully furnished, and built with durable, easy-to-maintain finishes.

Consider how your needs might change over time. A space built for a parent today can easily transition to a rental or office later with thoughtful planning.

## WHERE WILL THE ADU BE LOCATED?

The location of your ADU affects cost, privacy, and the permitting process.

**Interior ADU (Conversion)**
Located within the existing home, such as a basement or attic.

- **Pros:** Lowest cost to build; uses existing structures; little visual impact.
- **Cons:** Limited size; may require soundproofing and fire separation upgrades.
- **Best for:** Rental income or small households; proximity and connection.

**Attached ADU (Addition)**
Located on the side or rear of the primary home, sharing at least one wall.

- **Pros:** Shared utilities; easy access for family care situations.
- **Cons:** May fall within zoning setbacks and trigger a hearing for variances.
- **Best for:** Aging parents or owners who want some connection and privacy.

**Detached ADU (Cottage or Carriage House)**
A free-standing structure, often in the backyard or above a detached garage.

- **Pros:** Greatest independence and flexibility for new uses over time.
- **Cons:** Highest cost; separate building systems, utility and site work risks.
- **Best for:** Long-term rental or multigenerational living, and more privacy.

## HOW MUCH SPACE DO I NEED?

An ADU isn't just a building project; it is a lifestyle choice. With careful planning, you can create an ADU that grows with you and keeps your options open for the future.

**Ask yourself:**

- How many people will live there now and possibly into the future?
- Does the design meet the accessibility or mobility needs of the intended occupant(s)?
- How much space is needed for furniture, storage, or hobbies?

### COMMON ADU SIZES

**Studio: 350 to 500 sf**

- Ideal for one person


**One-bedroom: 500 to 800 sf**

- The most popular option, balancing comfort and efficiency

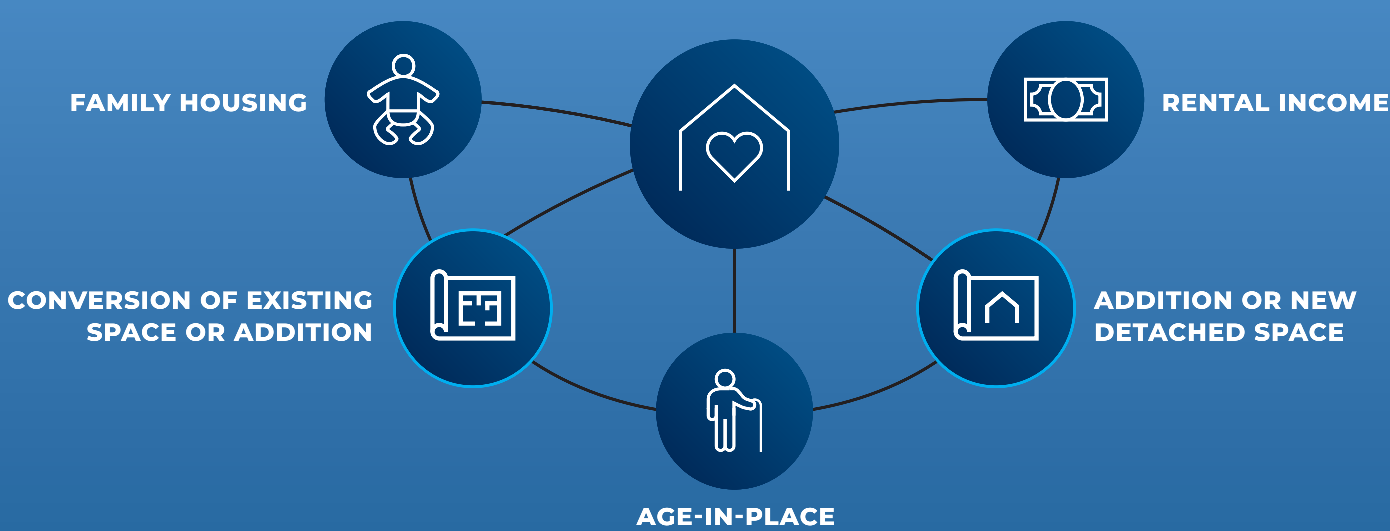

**Two-bedroom: 700 to 1,000 sf**

- Suitable for small families or caregivers with dependents


### FACTORY BUILT ADUS

Factory-built or manufactured ADUs can be more cost-effective than site-built construction, with shorter construction timelines and more consistent build quality. Consider manufactured ADUs when facing challenging site conditions, limited construction labor availability, or tight project timelines.

## USE INFLUENCE ON ADU DESIGN

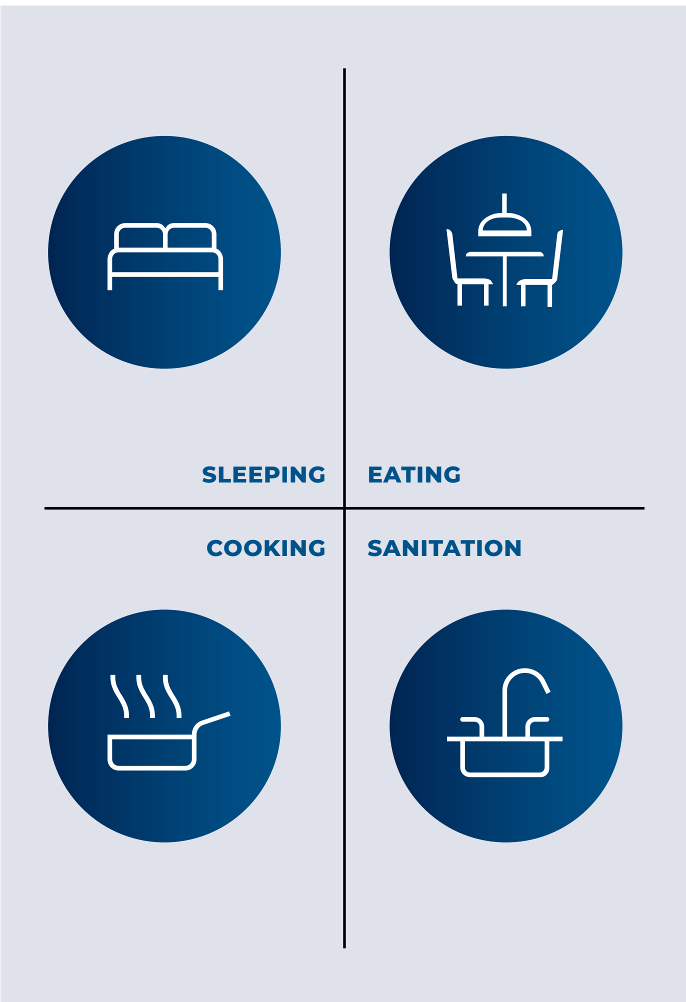


# ADU REGULATIONS

## CHARACTERISTICS OF A DWELLING UNIT

A dwelling unit is a single unit that provides complete, independent living facilities for one or more people.

Under New Hampshire building codes, that means spaces for sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation. While “Accessory Dwelling Unit” can sound clinical, the term has specific legal meaning. The building-code definition of “dwelling unit” is central to New Hampshire’s legal definition of an ADU.




**CONSIDER THIS**
If any one of the four components shown above is missing, the space does not meet the definition of a dwelling unit under New Hampshire building codes. For example, a home office or an artist’s studio above a garage will not be considered an ADU if it lacks a kitchen.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE’S REVISED ADU LAW

In 2017, New Hampshire adopted statewide rules requiring cities and towns to allow ADUs in local zoning ordinances. As ADUs gained momentum, the Legislature updated the law. In 2025, the Governor signed House Bill 577, which made significant changes to RSA 674:72 and to the ADU definition in RSA 674:71.

## LAW ALLOWS ADUS BY-RIGHT

Before July 1, 2025, many municipalities required planning board review, abutter notification, and a public hearing as part of the ADU approval process.

Under the revised law, those steps are no longer required in many situations. In many cases, homeowners can work with the local planning department, apply for permits, and build without a public hearing or having to justify the project to a board.

Even so, certain conditions can affect whether an ADU can be built by-right. The next page explains what state law allows and what municipalities may allow through local regulations.

**Note:** Many municipalities will need time to update local zoning ordinances to fully align with the changes to state law. Always review ADU laws for changes.

# NEW HAMPSHIRE ADU LAW

## WHAT THE STATE LAW ALLOWS HOMEOWNERS TO DO

- Build one ADU, either attached or detached, up to 750 square feet, regardless of lot size
- Choose a shared or separate entrance for attached ADUs
- Convert an existing structure into an ADU, regardless of its location on the property
- Connect ADU utilities to the primary home or to separate utility services, provided design standards are met
- Decide who occupies the ADU, without restrictions requiring familial relationships
- Design ADUs as studio, one-bedroom, or two-bedroom units
- Provide only one parking space for the ADU, regardless of unit size or bedroom count
- Design ADUs according to the homeowner's aesthetic preferences, subject to zoning

## AESTHETIC STANDARDS

Local governments with aesthetic standards for single-family homes in a given zoning district can require the standards be applied to ADUs

## WHAT STATE LAW ALLOWS LOCAL GOVERNMENTS TO REGULATE

- Set ADU size limits that are greater than 750 square feet
- Permit more than one ADU on a property (by-right or by approval)
- Allow the sale of an ADU separate from the main home as a condo
- Allow ADUs on properties where the homeowner is not a permanent resident
- Permit ADUs at townhomes (HOAs may have rules that do not allow ADUs)
- Permit ADUs at multifamily rental properties

## LOCAL ADOPTION OF REGULATIONS

For any of the above allowances to apply, a municipality must first adopt specific regulations to do so. Check local zoning ordinances and discuss your plans with the planning official to determine what is permitted in your community.

## CAVEATS TO ADU LAWS

While New Hampshire's updated laws make it easier to build an ADU, some key design choices will determine whether a public hearing and approval will be needed from local boards or commissions.

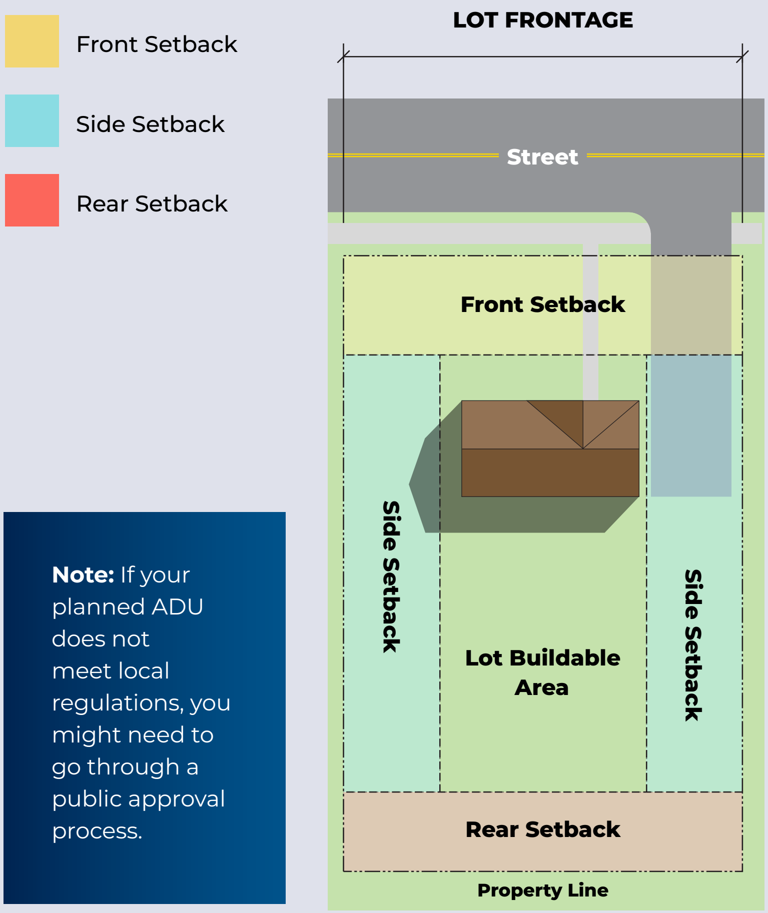
Local governments require ADUs to comply with many of the same zoning standards as single-family homes. For new ADU construction, this will include regulations such as building setback, which is the distance the building must be from the property line, or lot frontage, which requires a minimum length of the property to be adjacent to a road.

Local governments often have several other zoning requirements, such as lot coverage and floor-to-area ratio.

These controls are designed to limit how much of the property area can be covered by a building and its associated facilities (such as parking), and how high a building can rise above ground.

Confirm all applicable local requirements before finalizing designs. Building officials will not issue a building permit if the proposed ADU does not meet local land-use regulations. A property owner who seeks to build an ADU despite not meeting land-use regulations may be able to request relief from those regulations. The ADU Resources section of this guide provides more details on checking regulations and submitting permits.

## TYPICAL LOT SETBACKS & FRONTAGE DIAGRAM

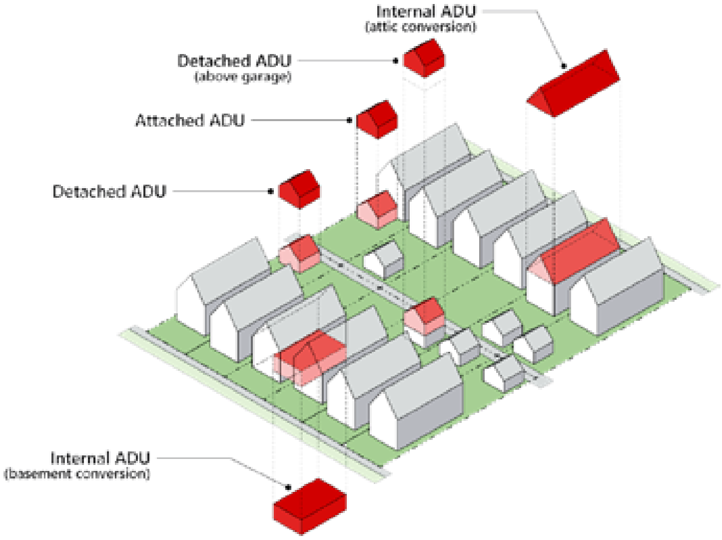



**Note:** If your planned ADU does not meet local regulations, you might need to go through a public approval process.

# ADU RESOURCES

## TAKING THE LEAP

The steps below offer a roadmap for planning, financing, building, and living with an ADU. Check out the sources that follow to define your needs, create a plan, estimate affordability, hire professionals, navigate construction, and prepare for life after the build.

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### STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR ADU NEEDS

The **Is An ADU Right for You?** section highlights common motivations for building an ADU. Clarifying why you want an ADU helps you choose a location and features that fit. The ADU Questionnaire on page 14 can help you identify additional design priorities.

2

### STEP 2: CHECK LOCAL REGULATIONS

It's critical to understand your town's requirements before moving forward. Local regulations may address maximum ADU size, setbacks, owner-occupancy, permitting steps, and fees. See the **Check Local Regulations** instructions on page 15 for help finding your zoning ordinance, zoning map, and dimensional standards.

3

### STEP 3: SKETCH A PLAN

Sketches help you think through options and communicate with local officials, design professionals, and builders. A simple site or layout sketch can test ideas, flag issues early, and confirm that your plans match your overall vision. The **Sketch a Plan** resource on page 15 explains how to create a sketch.

4

### STEP 4: ESTIMATE COST

Construction costs for an ADU can vary based on factors ranging from rocky sites to luxury finishes. The **Estimate Cost tool** on page 16 can help you create an initial project budget. Later in the process, you'll need a more detailed cost estimate developed by a design professional or contractor.

5

### STEP 5: HIRE PROFESSIONALS

Building an ADU is a major project, but it does not always require a large team of contractors. Some homeowners choose a full-service design-build approach, while others take on parts of the work themselves. Knowing when a licensed professional is required can help you plan confidently and avoid delays. The **Hiring Professionals** information on page 17 will help you determine which tasks you can manage and which are best left to professionals.

6

### STEP 6: SECURE FUNDS

When you decide to build an ADU, one of the first questions is often: How will I pay for it? There are several ways to finance an ADU. The best approach depends on factors such as your available home equity, the project's scope, and your comfort with taking on debt repayments. Market conditions also play a role. Many homeowners refinanced at low interest rates during the COVID-19 pandemic, making some borrowing options less desirable. The **Secure Financing** content on pages 18 & 19 describes common lending options.

7

### STEP 7: SUBMIT BUILDING PERMITS

Once your ADU plans are finalized and financing is in place, it is time to submit a building permit application to your municipality. Before applying, carefully review the permit application or submission packet. A complete application helps avoid delays or resubmissions. Once the application is accepted and reviewed, the municipality issues permits authorizing construction to begin. **Appendix C** includes a checklist of the information typically required in building permit applications.

8

### STEP 8: CONSTRUCT THE ADU

With financing secured and permits in hand, your ADU is now ready to move from planning to reality. The progress becomes visible week by week, as decisions become rooms, roof-lines, and, ultimately, a home. Knowing what to expect along the way can help keep the process exciting rather than stressful. The **Construct the ADU** content on page 20 can help you prepare for each phase of the build.

9

### STEP 9: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Once a Certificate of Occupancy is in hand and the tools are packed away, your ADU project is officially complete! But a finished ADU brings new responsibilities and opportunities. See **Other Considerations** on page 21 to make the most of your ADU.

# AN ADU QUESTIONNAIRE

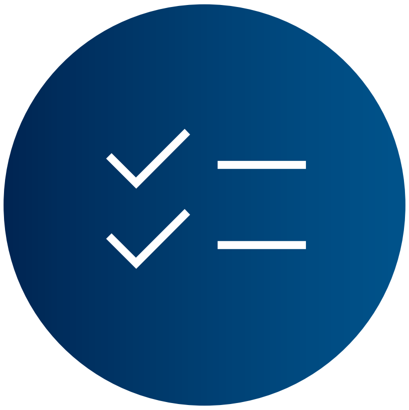
1

## STEP 1: DEFINE YOUR ADU

### ASSESS YOUR GOALS AND INFORM DESIGN CHOICES

Answer the questions below to clarify priorities and guide decisions about the design, location, cost, and long-term use of an ADU.

1. **Define the Purpose and Occupants**
   - Who will occupy the ADU? (family, yourself, renter, or guest?)
   - How long will they stay — short-term, long-term, or flex use?
   - Will there be multiple occupants or special needs (extra bedrooms, accessibility)?
   - Does the occupant have mobility or physical limitations?
   - Will the ADU need to accommodate multigenerational living?
2. **Consider Lifestyle and Privacy**
   - How often will you interact with the occupant? (daily, weekly, rarely?)
   - What level of privacy is needed between the ADU and the main home?
   - Should there be direct sight lines or shared access for close supervision?
   - If independence is preferred, would separate entrances or screening be helpful?
   - Will you use the ADU for personal purposes in the future (office, studio, guest suite)?
   - Are there storage needs or expansions to plan for?
3. **Plan for Design and Function**
   - How soon do you need the ADU completed? (affects design and financing options)
   - Should the ADU be adaptable or ADA-compliant for future use?
   - What accessibility may be needed? (step-free plan, levers, shower)
   - How energy-efficient do you want the unit to be? (insulation, appliances, HVAC)
   - Will you include solar panels or smart home features for efficiency?
   - What systems will provide heating and cooling? (heat pump, hot water, wood stove)
   - What security measures matter to you? (lighting, fencing, cameras, locked storage)
4. **Address Utilities and Code Compliance**
   - How will water, sewer, electricity, and internet connect to the ADU?
   - If you're on septic, can your system handle the added demand?
   - How will you ensure the project meets local zoning and building codes?
   - Have you scheduled a check-in with your local planning or building department?
5. **Budget and Maintenance**
   - What is your estimated total budget, including contingency for unexpected costs?
   - What finishes or materials best balance durability and affordability for the situation?
   - What ongoing maintenance will be needed after completion?
6. **Plan for Use and Long-Term Value**
   - Will the ADU generate rental income or serve family needs long-term?
   - Do you plan to live in the ADU later (retirement or downsizing)?
   - If renting, what lease terms or house rules will you establish?
   - How might an ADU impact your property value or appeal to future buyers?



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## STEP 2: CHECK LOCAL REGULATIONS

### FIND YOUR LOCAL ZONING ORDINANCE

Answer the questions below to clarify priorities and guide decisions about the design, location, cost, and long-term use of an ADU.

### IDENTIFY THE ZONING DISTRICT

With a zoning map, search for your property address or tax map and lot number. Identify the zoning district code (for example, R-1, R-2, or Residential-Agricultural). You'll need this to find dimensional requirements that apply to your property. Many municipalities have free online geographic information systems (GIS) maps that let you look up information on any property, often including the zoning district name, lot size, and sometimes dimensional data. If the map in your town is static, you can locate the property by street names and landmarks or ask the planning department to confirm your zoning district.

### CHECK DIMENSIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Each zoning district includes dimensional standards that control the size and location of buildings on a lot. These standards determine how large an ADU can be and where it can go on the site. Look for a Table of Dimensional Standards (or a similar section) in the zoning ordinance.

**Tip:** If your proposed ADU doesn't meet zoning standards, talk with your planning staff early.

### VERIFY ADU-SPECIFIC REGULATION

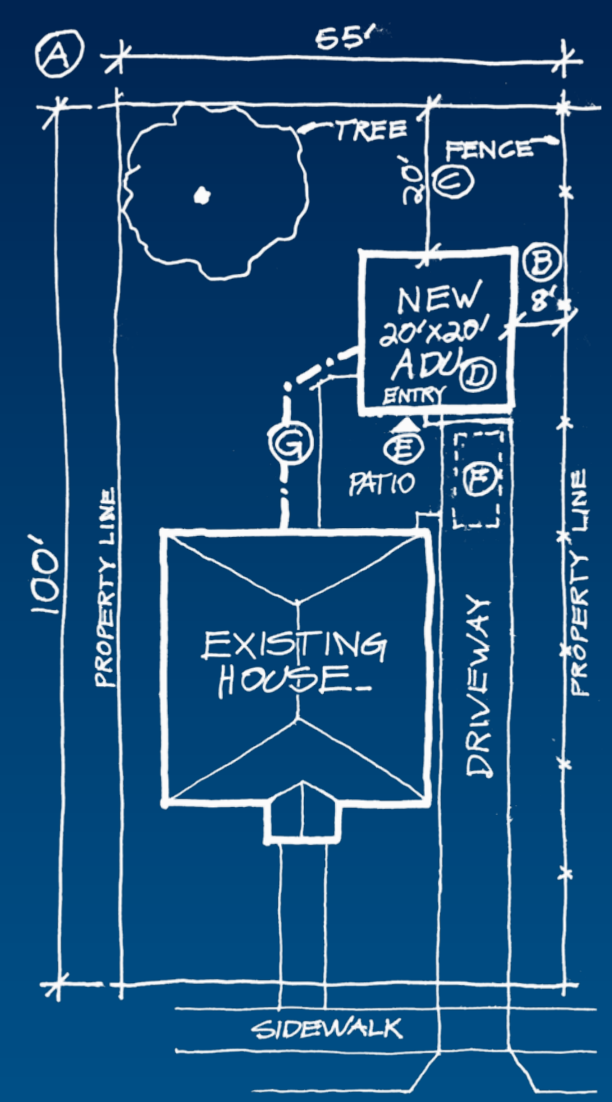
After checking the dimensional standards, locate the ADU section of the ordinance to determine:

- Whether more than one ADU is allowed per lot
- ADU Size limits
- Owner-occupancy requirements
- Short-term rental restrictions

3

## STEP 3: SKETCH A PLAN

Grab a sheet of graph paper and draw a sketch of your property. The lines on graph-paper are typically about 1/4" apart. This distance can be used to set a drawing scale. For instance, the distance between each line can represent 5' which would be equivalent to a scale of 1"=20'- 0". Now, you can sketch a site plan. Measure the lot's length and width. Draw the lot outline and note the lengths on the sketch in feet and inches. Then add other features to the plan, such as the house and driveway. When complete, make a copy and use it to try different locations for the ADU.



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## STEP 4: ESTIMATE COST

This "Simple Cost Estimate Tool" can help you establish a rough, flexible budget. You can refine it as you gather more information about the ADU's design, size, location, and construction method. A professional will prepare more detailed, itemized estimates to track project progress and manage costs throughout construction.

Construction projects typically begin with site and foundation work and conclude with interior and exterior finishes. A detailed estimate will break out material quantities, unit prices, and labor costs for each phase.

### CONSTRUCTION ELEMENTS BY PHASE

1. **Foundations**
   Excavation, foundation forms, poured concrete, rebar, site backfill, waterproofing, and drainage.
2. **Framing**
   Floor joists, stud walls, ceiling joists, roof rafters, exterior sheathing, beams, and specialties.
3. **Exterior Finishes**
   Exterior siding, roofing shingles, windows, doors, lighting, locksets, and exterior trim.
4. **Mechanical Systems**
   Plumbing, electrical, heating, ventilation, air conditioning, and other HVAC specialties.
5. **Interior Finishes**
   Insulation, drywall, flooring, interior trim, doors, mirrors, painting, and lighting. Kitchen counters, cabinets, and fixtures. Bathroom fixtures and tile.
6. **Site Features**
   Landscaping, patios, porches, decks, driveways, site cleanup, exterior lighting

.

## SIMPLE COST ESTIMATE TOOL

### CHOOSE YOUR ADU TYPE

- Interior Conversion $150–$300/sf
- Attached Addition $250–$400/sf
- New Detached $300–$600/sf

Write down the type selection

**ADU Type:** ______________________

### DETERMINE THE ADU SIZE

Most ADUs range in size between 400 sf and 1,000 sf. For reference, a 20'x 20' floor plan equates to a 400 sf ADU.

**Planned ADU Size (sf):** ______________________

### BASE CONSTRUCTION COST

Choose a price within the selected ADU type cost range.

**Cost x Size (sf):** ______________________

### TYPICAL SOFT COSTS

Costs include hiring professionals and fees paid to implement the project.

- Architect/Designer $6,000–$18,000
- Survey/Site Plan $1,500–$4,000
- Permits/Fees $500–$2,000
- Contingency Add 10%–20%
- Contractor Profit Add 10%

Add together these costs.

**Soft Cost Total:** ______________________

### SITE SPECIFIC COSTS

These costs vary the most from site to site. Include the costs you expect apply and obtain estimates for other site conditions as needed.

- Site work (grading) $3,000–$25,000
- Water/sewer tie-in $2,500–$12,000
- Septic upgrades $8,000–$25,000
- Electric & gas lines $1,000–$6,000
- Tree clearing $1,000–$10,000

Add together these costs

**Site Cost Total:** ______________________

### TOTAL ESTIMATE

Add up the above totals for an ADU estimate.

**Base Construction Cost:**

**$** ______________________

**+ Typical Soft Costs:**

**$** ______________________

**+ Site Specific Costs:**

**$** ______________________

**= Estimated ADU Cost:**

**$** ______________________

5

## STEP 5: HIRE PROFESSIONALS

Knowing when to hire a professional—and whom to hire—can help you plan well and avoid costly mistakes. If you hope to do some work yourself, it's important to understand where professional expertise is necessary. The information below outlines when hiring is optional, recommended, or required. Appendix A contains resources for finding properly credentialed professionals.

**Early Planning: All About You**
You define the purpose of your ADU, sketch plans, review zoning regulations, and talk with planning department staff. Some homeowners choose to consult an architect, designer, or builder early to explore options and direction, but this is optional.

**Stamped Plans: Professionals Needed**
As your concept becomes more detailed, professional expertise is often needed. An architect or building designer can prepare plans that document structural soundness. Stamped plans may also be required for interior conversions that involve structural modifications.

A civil engineer might be needed to provide a site survey and site plan. Stamped surveys and site plans are usually required when a project affects wetlands, site drainage, parking access, or septic design.

Most municipalities require plans stamped by a licensed designer and/or engineer when applying for building and site-related permits. These plans document how regulations are being met.

**Financing: When Lenders Want a Team**
You don't "hire" a mortgage lender, but if you need to borrow funds, lenders will require plans detailed enough to estimate construction costs, materials, and timelines. Some financial institutions require a licensed contractor to oversee the work, while others allow you to manage ADU construction yourself.

**Licensed Trades: When Required**
Mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work typically requires licensed professionals to pull permits and perform work. New Hampshire law allows homeowners to do their own mechanical, electrical, and plumbing work on their homes. However, doing this work carries risk. Understand the scope, safety requirements, and inspection process before proceeding.

**Construction: Can Be A DIY Affair**
Homeowners may choose to do their own painting, flooring, trim, landscaping, or cabinet installation. More experienced homeowners handle building framing, windows, doors, siding, or roofing. If you hire a general contractor, they will hire, coordinate, and manage skilled tradespeople on your behalf. Alternatively, you can take on this responsibility.

**Inspection & Certificate of Occupancy**
During the final stage, any remaining corrections are made and the building code official performs a final inspection. Once approved, a Certificate of Occupancy is issued, making the ADU legal to inhabit. Homeowners can typically obtain the certificate themselves. If a general contractor was hired, they are usually responsible for delivering the project through final inspection and occupancy approval.

6

## STEP 6: SECURE FINANCING

### PICKING THE RIGHT PATH FOR YOUR HOME

| Borrowing Option | How It Works |
|---|---|
| **Home Equity Line of Credit (HELOC)** | Borrow against the equity in the home. Funds are drawn as needed during construction, with interest payments in the draw period. |
| **Home Equity Loan (Fixed-Rate Second Mortgage)** | Borrow a fixed amount (beyond your existing mortgage) and repay it in equal monthly payments. |
| **Cash-Out Refinance** | Replace the existing mortgage with a larger one and pocket the difference. |
| **Construction Loan (Construction-to-Permanent)** | Loan funds are released in stages as construction progresses. Once complete, the loan converts to a permanent mortgage. |
| **Renovation Loans (FHA 203k and HomeStyle)** | Borrow based on the "after-improved" value, like a construction loan but wrapped into a standard mortgage. |
| **Reverse Mortgage (Age 62+)** | Borrow against home equity without monthly repayment. The loan is repaid when the borrower sells or passes away. |

**Using Your Home's Equity**
A HELOC behaves like a second mortgage, allowing you to draw cash based on your home's value and repay over time. This approach works well for simple ADU projects like basement conversions. HELOCs allow you to draw only the cash you need, when you need it, which can keep early interest payments lower. This is an advantage for projects with long construction timelines. Many homeowners like this approach because it keeps their first mortgage intact (which may carry a lower interest rate) while only financing the cost of the ADU. HELOCs typically have higher interest rates than 30-year mortgages, and projects that exceed available equity may require other financing.

**Refinancing or Cash-Out Refinance**
For larger projects, refinancing may be a good option. A cash-out refinance replaces your existing mortgage with a larger one, providing the difference in cash. This results in a single mortgage payment going forward. However, if the existing mortgage has a low interest rate and you refinance at a higher rate, refinancing can increase the total interest paid over the life of the loan. For this reason, refinancing should be carefully evaluated.

**Construction or Renovation Loans**
Projects that involve a new foundation, significant site work, or a fully detached ADU may be better suited to construction or renovation loans. Construction loans often release funds in draws: staged payments tied to construction milestones (foundation, framing, utilities, finishing). For major build-outs, this is the most logical funding path. The loans are designed to account for the property's future value once the ADU is completed. Because the lenders underwrite based on the "after-improvement" value, homeowners with limited equity may still qualify. These loans often involve more paperwork, inspections, and a requirement to work with a licensed contractor.

**Renovation-Mortgage Blends**
If you're buying a home and plan to build an ADU or renovate at the same time, a renovation-style mortgage (like certain first-mortgage renovation loans) may allow you to combine the purchase and construction financing into a single loan. While less common for standalone ADUs, this option can simplify financing for buyers who plan to add an ADU immediately.

## MATCHING YOUR PROJECT TO THE LOAN

**Consider these questions:**

- How much equity do I have?
- How big or complex is the ADU?
- How much control do I want?

If there is enough value in the home, a HELOC or home-equity loan may suffice, especially for a simple ADU conversion or a modest, phased project. More costly detached ADUs or site work may require a construction or renovation loan, especially if equity is limited. If you value the flexibility of incremental draws, consider a HELOC or construction loan; if you prefer predictability, a fixed-rate loan or cash-out refinance may suit your needs. For modest ADUs or phased projects, borrowing against equity is likely the most path.

### Securing Funds to Build an ADU

Lenders generally want to see that your project is feasible, that you understand the likely cost, and that the finished ADU will add value to the property. The financing process follows these milestones:

- Assess feasibility and estimate cost
- Research financing options
- Get pre-approved
- Develop preliminary plans
- Submit full loan application
- Appraisal & underwriting
- Loan approval & closing
- Construction draws (if applicable)
- Final approval & completion

Start by confirming your project's feasibility and creating a rough budget. Understand what type of ADU you want (interior, attached, detached, modular) and whether zoning will allow it. Use the simple cost estimate tool on page 16 to estimate the cost range.

Then, to explore financing options, contact several banks or credit unions to learn about their products. Ask about the minimum credit and income requirements. Ask whether they will recognize future ADU value or rental income in underwriting and whether they require a general contractor for the construction loans.

**Why?** Lenders want to know the project is practical before they spend time on pre-approval.

**Appendix B** provides a list of New Hampshire lenders who offer ADU-specific loans. Once you have a preferred financing path, request pre-approval from your selected lender. Pre-approval demonstrates what you can borrow and establishes your working budget. The lender will pull your credit history and verify your income. The lender may also ask for a description of how you plan to use the funds requested.

**Why?** Pre-approval allows you to hire professionals confidently and move into design development.

When homeowners choose a construction or home renovation loan, lenders will request more detailed information about the ADU: a floor plan and site plan, the general contractor's preliminary cost estimate, and a description of materials, systems, and quantities. While some construction-style loans allow owner-managed projects, most require a contractor.

Your lender will review the documents and determine the loan limit based on many requirements.

For all borrowing options, a lender will order an appraisal of your home's value. Appraisals consider recent sales of similar homes and may also consider ADU value or anticipated rental income. Underwriting reviews documents and confirms the project is sound.

**Appraisal:** An evaluation of a property's market value by a trained professional.

### Loan Approval and Closing

Once the lender underwrites and approves the loan, you close on the funds. Access to funds depends on the loan type. HELOCs provide immediate access to funds, while construction loans release money in stages (draws). The lender will send an inspector to verify progress, ensuring quality and compliance. If you refinance your mortgage, all funds will be disbursed at closing. You now have the cash needed to hire contractors, submit permits, and schedule work.

### Completion and Final Appraisal

When using a construction loan to pay for an ADU, a final inspection or appraisal may be required. The documentation for completion includes a certificate of occupancy, the contractor's completion statement, and updated insurance information. Once approved, a construction loan converts to its permanent form (for one-time-close loans), or the construction line is closed out.

**7**

## STEP 7: BUILDING PERMITS

Before applying, contact your local planning and building department to confirm what materials are required. Requirements vary by municipality. **Appendix C** contains a list of commonly required permit information. Assembling this information in advance will streamline the application process.

**8**

## STEP 8: CONSTRUCTION

### What Happens First

Most ADU projects begin with site work. For new construction, the site is cleared and marked out, the ground is opened, and utilities are located. Next, the foundation or structural base takes shape. It may be a fresh slab for a detached cottage or reinforcement for a garage conversion. If you are converting space, expect demolition. Framing follows, stud walls rise, roof-lines appear, windows are placed, and you can walk through rooms you previously imagined.

### Your Role During the Work

Even if a general contractor leads the way, the homeowner remains an active part of the building process. The owner approves finishes, refines layout details, chooses fixtures, and makes decisions that affect the ADU's cost and character. If you're acting as your own general contractor, you will schedule trades, coordinate inspections, and plan material deliveries.

### Structures and Systems

After framing, other essential work begins. Electricians run wiring, plumbers set lines, and HVAC contractors install heating and cooling units. Then, insulation is installed. Inspection of the walls and mechanical, electrical, and plumbing systems will take place. Next comes the drywall, paint, flooring, cabinets, and trim.

### Encountering Pitfalls

Even smooth projects have bumps. A fixture arrives late. Rain slows excavation. A detail needs redesign. Build flexibility into project timeline and keep a 20% contingency cushion in your budget. Confirm choices early to avoid re-work or change orders. If something is unclear, ask questions. Clear communication is key to project success.

### The Finish Line

The final stage brings inspections, last-minute touch-ups, and the satisfying moment when a Certificate of Occupancy is issued. That document means your ADU is officially a legal, livable dwelling ready for guests, tenants, or family members. What began as an idea has become a home for someone to live in, care for, and be proud of.

9

## STEP 9: OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

**If You Plan to Rent Your ADU**
Renting offsets project costs, builds long-term equity, and provides housing within your community, but it comes with obligations. If you're a first-time landlord, consider landlord training to gain confidence and reduce misunderstandings. Landlord trainings through organizations such as HomeTeamNH.org can help property owners:

- Write solid lease agreements
- Understand legal responsibilities
- Abide by applicable tenant protections
- Set rental rates and manage utilities fairly
- Screen tenants according to fair-housing law
- Navigate maintenance, repairs, & communication

**Understanding Appraisal & Property Value**
Once the ADU is built, a home will likely undergo a new appraisal, especially if it involves a refinance or rental-based financing. An appraiser will look at:

- Total new square footage
- Number of bedrooms and baths
- Separate or shared utilities
- Rental income potential
- Comparable properties with ADUs in your region

In many New Hampshire towns, ADUs are new enough that comparable sales are scarce. This means appraisers may need to consider other types of multi-generational homes. Over time, as more ADUs enter the market, valuation will become more predictable and likely more favorable.

A re-appraisal can show increased equity in the home, leading to new refinancing options or access to a HELOC. An ADU may boost resale value or appeal to a broader pool of buyers.

**Living With an ADU Over Time**
Owning an ADU comes with maintenance obligations. Create a schedule for checking the mini-split filter, plumbing fixtures, and exterior upkeep. ADUs also affect insurance coverage. Your coverage will need an adjustment after construction is done.

Homes with ADUs tend to evolve. The space may begin as family housing, then transition into rental income, a home office, a guest suite, or aging-in-place quarters later. Consider the privacy zones and noise control, and add fencing, landscaping, separate entry lighting as needed. Create shared space agreements with rules for how to use elements such as laundry driveways, storage, trash, and mail delivery.

**A Community Investment**
A new ADU provides more than square footage. It will support an aging parent, new worker, young renter, or returning family member who otherwise might struggle to find a place to live nearby. Make ownership a point of civic pride. Every ADU adds relief to New Hampshire's deep need for new housing.

To learn more about ADUs, check out the links in **Appendix D.**

# SUCCESS STORIES

## ADU SUCCESS STORIES ACROSS NEW HAMPSHIRE

Every ADU tells a story about the people who live in them, their families, and how they've adapted their homes to meet their needs.

The following stories reflect the diversity of communities, housing types, and motivations behind building an ADU. These New Hampshire homeowners demonstrate that ADUs aren't just about adding square footage, they're about expanding possibilities for how we live, care, and plan for the future.

Each story shows why homeowners chose to build, how they navigated design and financing, and what they learned as they turned their ADU dream into reality.

As you read, notice how homeowners balanced cost, creativity, and circumstance. Each found solutions to common challenges, including tight budgets, accessibility needs, sustainability goals, and changing families.

By the end of this section, you'll be better equipped to imagine what might be possible on your own property, informed by the experiences of Granite States who have taken the leap.

### A CONNECTED FAMILY IN FREEDOM:

Melissa's mother, Sally, had been living alone, and the isolation was beginning to take its toll. After building an ADU in the backyard, Sally now enjoys visits nearly every day.

### ENERGY EFFICIENT D-I-Y ADU IN EXETER:

Lindsay and Malcolm hand-built their ADU as a source of income. Using sustainable and reclaimed materials, they created an energy-efficient, eco-friendly space worthy of a magazine cover.

### A GARAGE CONVERSION IN NASHUA:

Michael and Cindy faced difficult choices while caring for Cindy's elderly parents. Converting their garage into an ADU became an unexpected way to improve quality of life.

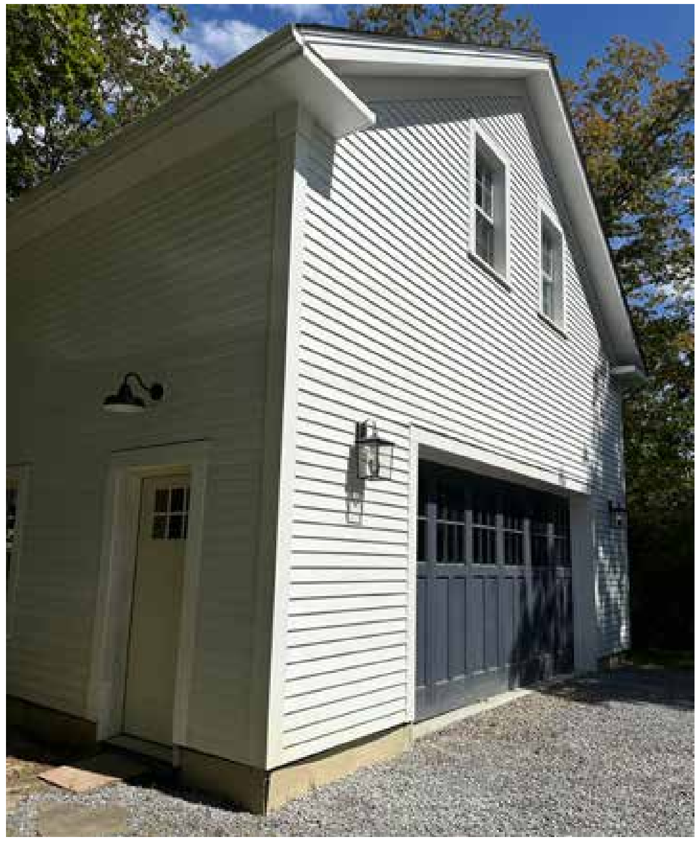
**DOWNSIZING DURING COVID IN NEW HAMPTON:**
When Sue and Tom were thinking about downsizing, their children returned home. Building an ADU helped them discover the benefits of living together.

**A FACTORY BUILT ADU IN BARRINGTON:**
When Cindy's son was ready to buy his first home, few options were available. They found a creative solution by placing a factory-built ADU in Cindy's backyard.

**AN ACCESSIBLE ADU IN WINDHAM:**
Because of vision challenges, Mark's mother, Mary, had never had a space of her own. An addition to the family home now gives her the independence she wanted.

# ENERGY EFFICIENT DIY ADU

## EXETER, NH



### When Lindsay and Malcolm purchased a home in Exeter in 2021, they knew they wanted to make the fixer-upper their own.

As they started renovating, they realized their space was too cramped for their vision. “When we realized what we wanted to build was an ADU, we thought that we might as well start fresh.” They decided to build a large, detached garage with a second-story loft ADU above it.

### *Sustainability, privacy, and aesthetics were key.*

They used reclaimed rigid insulation, installed an advanced energy recovery ventilator (ERV), and committed to an all-electric design for appliances and heating. “It is incredibly efficient, and most of the materials are sourced from local suppliers,” Malcolm said. They drew inspiration from historic New England farmhouses and used white linseed oil paint on the siding.

Over four years, the couple designed, built, and finished the ADU themselves. They did everything except pouring the concrete foundation and installing drywall. “I have videos of myself in a harness putting shingles on the roof,” Lindsay said. “It was a real adventure, but it was worth it.”

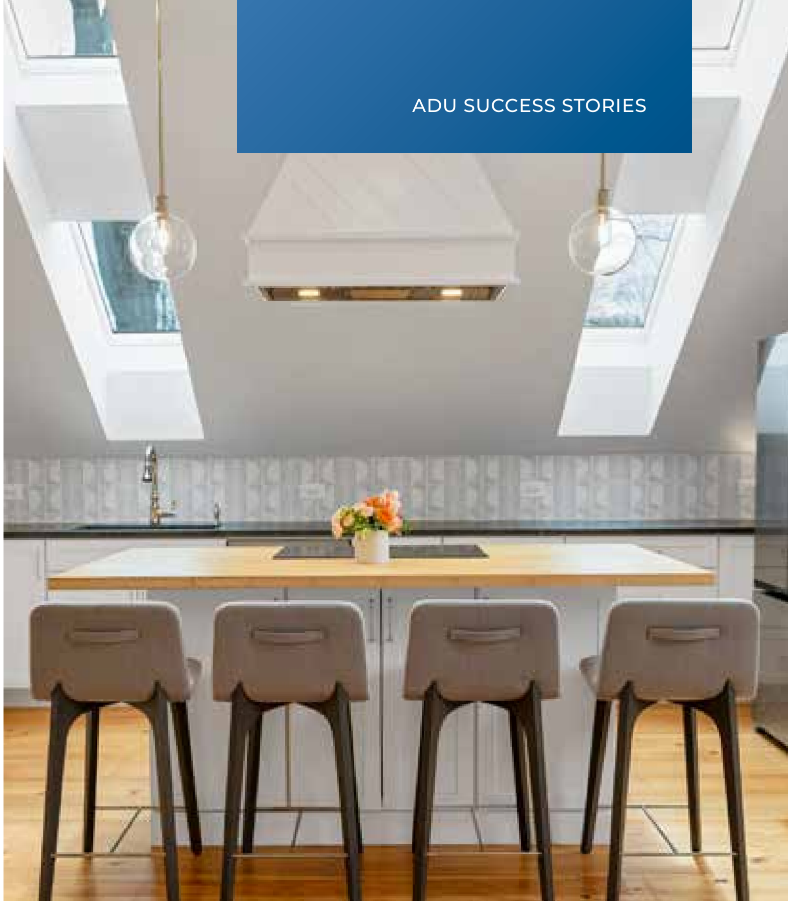
## A SPACE FIT FOR MAGAZINE COVERS

The result is a stunning one-bedroom unit tucked above the garage, blending seamlessly with the main home and the surrounding neighborhood.

The couple started reviewing tenant applications shortly before the ADU was done, and their tenant moved in as soon as the space was ready. "It was a great experience. We barely cross paths, but when we do, it is always friendly." To increase privacy, they installed skylights instead of windows on the side of the ADU that faces the main house.

*"We wanted to make sure our tenant has the privacy they need while maintaining a bright, open feel in the ADU."*

The ADU now provides a reliable source of income, while the expanded garage space serves as a workshop as they continue renovating their primary home.



Bright & Simple Materials Work Together To Pull a Focus on the Island

## ADU QUICK FACTS

- Type: New Construction ADU/Garage
- Size: 750 sf + 750 sf Garage Below
- Cost: $250,000 to $275,000
- Income: $1,200-$1,600/month
- Approval: Special Exception
- Features: Do-It-Yourself Build & High-efficiency Construction

## LINDSAY & MALCOLM'S ADVICE

*"Keep it simple, and focus on your values. If you are doing it yourself, know that it takes time. It's worth it!"*

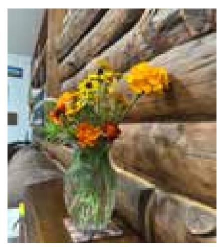
# DOWNSIZING DURING COVID

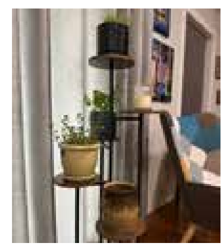
## NEW HAMPTON, NH

Sue and Tom had lived in their rural New Hampton home for over 15 years. Their children had grown and moved out, the house felt quiet, and they wanted to downsize.

Then, everything changed when the COVID-19 pandemic hit in 2020. Their adult children and grandchildren returned home. The once-quiet house was suddenly full again. Six people across three generations shared one kitchen. Daily life was crowded and complicated.

Sue and Tom wanted something smaller and more manageable for retirement, but they didn't want to leave their beloved 28-acre property. It wasn't until everyone was back home that they realized an ADU could offer the balance they were looking for. They could have togetherness and autonomy while keeping their property in the family.





## WHEN PLANNING BEGAN

Sue and Tom kept accessibility and long-term functionality in mind. They found themselves navigating town regulations and the quirks of building an attached ADU on a log home. Aging in place was a top consideration, so they prioritized one-level living, wide doorways, and a layout that supports mobility.

"It's not just about getting older, it's about making a space that can adapt if anything happens. We didn't want to wait for a crisis."

Their contractor built the shell quickly – just a few months from foundation to weather-tight frame. From there, the couple took on the rest themselves. They worked evenings and weekends, finishing the interior piece by piece. "You pay in either time or money," Sue said. "We chose time."

Their creativity showed up in clever design choices: a dual-access bathroom that lets the toilet and shower be used separately, a cozy wood stove, and a log wall from the original exterior. The result is a warm, functional home that feels thoughtful and comfortable.

Since moving into the ADU, the couple has found the rhythm of multigenerational living. They maintain privacy but benefit from shared responsibilities, financial relief, and the joy of having family close. Their adult sons and grandchildren live just steps away from them in the main house.

Sue and Tom envision using their ADU as a home base while traveling during retirement, and possibly as a future living space for their grandchildren. They've even planted an orchard of peaches, apples, pears with the next generation in mind. "We're building something sustainable for our family," they said. "Not just for the present, but for the future."

### SUE'S ADVICE

*"Build for functionality over time, not just for now."*

### ADU QUICK FACTS

- Type: One-Story Addition
- Size: 800 sf
- Cost: $115,000
- Approval: Special Exception
- Features: Age-in-Place Design

### WHY AN ADU?

Downsizing into an ADU attached to the home allowed this family to live together and build a more resilient family housing situation for everyone.

# AN ACCESSIBLE ADU

## WINDHAM, NH

When Jess and Mark bought their house in 2015, it was just the right size for their family. They could support Mark's legally blind mother, Mary, while raising their children.

Mary loved being close to her grandchildren, and the family cherished the joy of multigenerational living. But over time, space grew tight. Sharing one bathroom with five people and cooking elbow-to-elbow in the kitchen made it hard to balance privacy and connection.

*"At first, we all fit, but as the kids got bigger, the house didn't."*

### WEIGHING THE OPTIONS

The family considered renovating their whole house or helping Mary buy a small home. Neither offered the safety, connection, and long-term security they were seeking. In the end, one idea kept returning: an ADU. "It made the most sense," Jess says. "We wanted Mark's mother to be independent, but still close."

### ACCESSIBILITY

Accessibility was at the heart of the design. The ADU was built on one level with hard flooring, 36-inch doorways, and no steps between the driveway and the entryway.

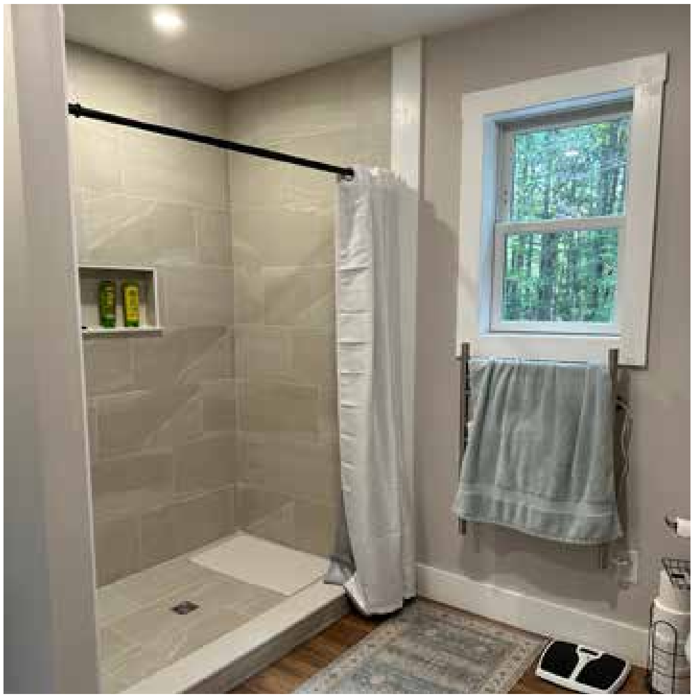
A spacious, ADA-compliant bathroom and a heated hallway between the main house and the ADU ensured comfort, independence and connection. "We thought about everything," Jess explained, "from where you hang your coat to how you make your coffee. The space supports Mary's independence while making routines easier and safer. The design allows her to age in place with dignity and confidence.

## DESIGN CHALLENGES

Like many construction projects, there were unexpected hurdles. When a rock ledge beneath the build site prevented them from building a full basement, Jess and Mark modified their plans to include a large attic above the ADU and a small crawlspace underneath for storage instead. They used excavated rock from the crawlspace to build a retaining wall and expand parking on the property. "We did our homework," Jess said. "We knew the zoning, the footprint, and our needs. That preparation kept us on track and allowed us to adapt with confidence."

Mary moved in shortly after construction was complete, and the change was immediate. "I used to share everything—growing up with four brothers, then raising a family," she said. "Now I have privacy, and a place to call my own."

Inspired by their experience, Jessica and Mark launched Kinstruct Tiny Homes, their own ADU design and consulting company. Jessica's background in real estate and Mark's expertise in construction provided them with the knowledge to build practical ADUs for other families.



## ADU QUICK FACTS

- ADU Type: Home Addition
- ADU Size: 768 sf
- ADU Cost: $250,000
- Approvals: By-Right Permit
- Features: ADA Accessibility

## WHY AN ADU?

The new space of an ADU helped elevate the entire family's quality of life while providing low-barrier design features to ease daily tasks.

## JESSICA & MARK'S ADVICE

*"Talk through the details. Know your finances, understand your options, and discuss all outcomes. There's always a way to make it happen."*

# A FACTORY BUILT ADU

## BARRINGTON, NH

### GAVIN WAS READY TO BUY A HOME

When Cindy's son, Gavin, was ready to buy his first home, the timing was challenging. As a young professional with a stable job at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, savings in the bank, and a paid-off car, Gavin appeared well positioned to enter the housing market. But homes were scarce, overpriced, or selling too quickly to compete.

With five people living in their small, Cape-style home, Cindy knew that it was time for Gavin to have a place of his own.

After exploring everything from RVs to prefabricated house kits online, Cindy and Gavin eventually discovered Backyard ADUs, a company that builds high-efficiency modular ADU homes.

Their ADU was factory-built in two sections, then delivered and craned into place. "It was amazing to watch," Cindy said. The pre-installed wiring and thoughtful construction techniques made the setup feel almost like snapping LEGO pieces together. Much of the interior – plumbing, lighting, and even the kitchen cabinets—was already finished.

A yellow entry door is a playful pop of color that greets people upon arrival

### CHALLENGES PREPARING THE SITE FOR AN ADU

Cindy's property is on rocky, uneven land with poor drainage, so the site for Gavin's ADU had to be built up instead of being dug down. The ADU also required its own septic system, one of the highest costs of the project.

The project cost totaled $300,000, with $180,000 attributed to the ADU and the remainder covering grading, parking, infrastructure, and other site work.

Cindy said Backyard ADUs was an excellent company to work with, but if she could do it again, she would spend more time vetting subcontractors to ensure consistent quality.

### ADU QUICK FACTS

- ADU Type: Modular Detached
- ADU Size: 600 sf
- ADU Cost: $305,000
- Approvals: Contractor Managed
- Parking: Separate Driveway
- Features: Room to Stretch

### WHY AN ADU?

- Average Rent in Portsmouth: $2,800/month
- Modular ADU construction cost: $305,000 (once)
- Estimated ADU  loan payment: $1,800/month

Gavin now lives in the 600-square-foot home next to the family's main house. It's affordable, efficient, and gives him independence while still being close to the rest of the family. Gavin pays rent under a standard lease, and the space is fully independent.

Looking ahead, the ADU offers flexibility for Cindy and her family. "In 10 years, Gavin might still live there, or maybe my husband and I will move in, and he'll take the main house, or we could rent it out while traveling," she said.

## CINDY'S ADVICE

*"Build an ADU as an income source, and as an option to downsize in place over time."*

A side table and art offer contrast with the green paint in the entryway.

From Cindy's backyard, Gavin's ADU blends in with the natural features, giving both homes privacy.

The modular ADU was placed on the foundation by a crane.

# A CONNECTED FAMILY

## FREEDOM, NH

### SALLY WANTED TO DOWNSIZE, BUT SHE WASN'T SURE HOW.

Her longtime home had become too much to manage alone. In Freedom, housing options for older adults were limited. Available homes were scarce, prices were high, and senior housing came with high homeowner association fees. However, moving farther away from family was off the table.

Sally's daughter, Melissa, knew the only workable solution was to bring her mom closer to home. Melissa wanted to make sure Sally had a home that respected her independence and daily routines. Together, they decided to build a detached, one-bedroom ADU designed for aging in place with comfort and privacy.

"There are trees between the main house and Sally's ADU, so the ADU feels like its own peaceful cottage. We can see each other without getting in each other's way," said Melissa.

Melissa and her mother, Sally, take in the sun from the front porch of the ADU.

### START TO FINISH IN 7 MONTHS

Construction started in September 2024, and after a few delays due to an electrician shortage and longer site plan review, Sally moved into her new home in March 2025. The result was a 900-square-foot, energy-efficient, fully accessible ADU. "We wanted one-level living. No stairs. Just ease," Melissa said.

### AN ADU WITHIN BUDGET

Melissa set a budget of $200,000, and the total cost came in at approximately $220,000. To Melissa, it was worth every penny. Her mother is safe, nearby, and connected to the community. Sally's friends pick her up to go shopping, neighbors drop by to say hello, and her granddaughters visit. They've added vibrancy to their property without sacrificing space or privacy.

### ADU QUICK FACTS

- ADU Type: One-Story Detached
- ADU Size: 900 sf
- ADU Cost: $220,000
- Approvals: Special Exception

### WHY AN ADU?

- Median Home Price in Freedom: $440,000
- ADU construction cost: $220,000
- A Half-Price Alternative Housing Solution

Sally loves being close to her daughter, and she often surprises Melissa's family with fresh flowers, fudge, or sourdough bread from local markets.

"Building the ADU wasn't just a housing solution for my mother, it is a way to care for someone who's always cared for me," said Melissa.

Sally's ADU has a country home feel with natural wood flooring, cabinetry, and a dramatic exposed wood beam ceiling. The ADU has an air of high-quality fit and finish while using budget-friendly materials.

### MELISSA'S ADVICE

*"Be clear about your goals and don't underestimate how good it feels when the people you care about are close."*

# A GARAGE CONVERSION

**NASHUA, NH**

## KEEPING PARENTS CLOSE TO HOME

Cindy's parents had lived in their home for decades, but the upkeep was becoming overwhelming. Cindy's father struggled with stairs. The lawn went untended. The family faced a difficult choice: leaving their home and moving to assisted living or finding a new solution. For Cindy's husband Michael, the answer seemed clear. "I didn't want them in an assisted living facility," he noted. "I wanted them to be surrounded by family."

Michael and Cindy envisioned an ADU built out of the garage attached to their home: private, fully equipped, and designed for Cindy's parents' needs. The layout includes a cozy living area with space for their favorite rocking chairs, a small flexible kitchen, a bedroom with storage, and a spacious bathroom with its own washer and dryer. Every detail was chosen to support aging in place. The ADU included no stairs but plenty of wide-open spaces and windows that looked out onto the shared backyard patio.

The ADU offers both privacy and connection. Cindy's parents now enjoy a space of their own, complete with a separate entrance and full amenities, while knowing family is just steps away. They can maintain their independence and routines, supported by the comfort of nearby family.

Cindy's father displaying one of his many detailed wood carvings he makes at home.

## ADU QUICK FACTS

- ADU Type: Garage conversion
- ADU Size: 500 sf (half addition)
- ADU Cost: $149,000 (in 2024)
- Approvals: No variances needed
- Parking: No new parking built
- Features: Age-friendly design

## WHY AN ADU?

- Assisted living: $10,000/month
- ADU build cost: $149,000 (once)
- Family connection: Priceless

## A FUTURE LEGACY

Michael imagines that one day, his children or grandchildren may live in the main home while he and Cindy move into the ADU, making the home a resource for future generations.

"This ADU means my parents can live stress-free, and my kids and grandkids will always have a place too," Cindy said. "It's not just about today, it's about tomorrow."

Since moving in, Cindy's parents have flourished. Her father spends afternoons making intricate wood carvings, while her mother enjoys daily walks with the family dog, Bella. They join backyard barbecues, celebrate holidays with grandchildren, and watch their great-grandchildren grow up before their eyes.

The ADU has also created peace of mind. If Cindy's parents need anything, Michael and Cindy are right there. They no longer need to worry about home maintenance, finances, or isolation and can focus on enjoying life.

### MICHAEL & CINDY'S ADVICE

*"Design the ADU you want, then work with people who know the process... It's one of the best decisions you'll ever make."*

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**NHHousing.org**

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