



CALIFORNIA APARTMENT ASSOCIATION

Industry Insights

Accessory Dwelling Units

I Introduction

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are secondary housing units located on an existing residential parcel. They have a separate kitchen, bathroom, and exterior access independent of the primary residence but cannot be sold separate from the main unit. ADUs are also commonly referred to as accessory apartments, accessory dwellings, mother-in-law units, or granny flats. These units can either be attached to, or detached from, the primary residence. Below is a breakdown of the possible permutations of an ADU:

- **Detached:** The unit is separated from the primary structure and may be prefabricated or constructed.
- **Attached:** The unit is attached to the primary structure by sharing at least one wall.
 - *Converted Existing Space:* Space (e.g., master bedroom, attached garage, storage area, or similar use, or an accessory structure) on the lot of the primary residence that is converted into an independent living unit.
 - *Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU):* A specific type of conversion of existing space that is contained entirely within an existing or proposed single-family residence. JADUs cannot exceed 500 square feet and may share facilities with the primary dwelling.

II State and Local Regulation

Over the past few years, a number of state laws have regulated local government review and approval of ADUs and JADUs in order to augment their development and streamline approval. The California Department of Housing and Community Development has authored the most comprehensive paper that covers every legal development regarding ADUs and JADUs: [The Accessory Dwelling Unit Handbook](#). The handbook outlines zoning and development standards for ADUs and JADUs and includes answers to frequently asked questions.

References

- Civil Code Section 4751
- Government Code Section 65852.150
- Government Code Section 65852.2
- Government Code Section 65852.22

