



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

## ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

### WHAT?

**ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU)** means an attached or a detached dwelling unit, which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more individuals and includes permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation.

### WHERE?

ADU's *may* be permitted in the **R-1A, R-1B, R-1C, R-2** and **R-3** residential zoning districts in conjunction with an existing built or proposed to be built single-family detached dwelling or two-family-zero lot line dwelling.

### TYPES.



\*Junior ADUs may share bathing/sanitation facilities with the principal dwelling unit and must be attached to the principal dwelling unit.

### NEXT STEPS?

Interested in an ADU for your property?  
The following page provides an overview of the review and approval processes for developing an ADU in the City of Appleton.

Last Edit: 9/30/2025 | Page 1 of 6

Community Development Department  
100 N. Appleton Street  
Appleton, WI 54911  
p: 920.832.6468  
[www.appletonwi.gov](http://www.appletonwi.gov)



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

# **ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS**

## **Process Overview**

### **1 Scope Project and Reach Out**

Scope out the project and calculate approximate dimensions and areas of the lot, existing structures, and proposed structures. A conceptual floorplan and/or site plan is a great way to start. Reach out to the Community and Development Dept. (CDD) to discuss the project and review for compliance with applicable regulations.

### **2 Review Zoning and Building Code Regulations and Standards**

An ADU or JADU must comply with all applicable Municipal Code regulations. The project must be in compliance with zoning code regulations and standards regarding principal and accessory use area ratios, lot setbacks, lot coverage, and more. In addition, the project must comply with building code regulations and standards regarding fire separation, access, electrical service, plumbing, and more. Note that all current building code requirements and standards apply to both new construction and/or the conversion of an existing building.

### **3 Record a Deed Restriction**

Prior to issuance of any building permits for an ADU or JADU, the owner must record a deed restriction at the applicable county Register of Deeds Office in a form approved by the City that prohibits the sale of the ADU or JADU separate from the sale of the principal dwelling unit.

### **4 Apply For and Obtain Building Permits**

The required building permits will vary by project, however, the most common include:

- Residential Building Permit (Interior Remodel or Standard)
- Electrical Permit
- HVAC Permit
- Plumbing Permit

Only a licensed contractor or homeowner who owns and occupies the property may conduct work on the property. In either case, all necessary building permits must be obtained prior to work. Construction may begin once necessary permits are received and posted on site. Scheduled inspections must be performed by City staff at various phases of work to assure compliance with building codes.

### **5 Coordinate Final Inspection and Receive Certificate of Occupancy**

Once necessary work and related inspections have been completed, a Final Inspection with the Residential Building Inspector must be coordinated. In addition, a building unit number will be assigned to the ADU or JADU per the Building Address Policy. Following the completion of the Final Inspection and address update, a Certificate of Occupancy will be issued.



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

## Zoning Code Regulations and Standards

### Permitted Zoning Districts

R-1A

R-1B

R-1C

R-2

R-3

### General Use Regulations

**Timing of construction:** An ADU or JADU cannot be constructed or established prior to the principal dwelling unit being present or under construction on the lot.

**Sale:** An ADU or JADU cannot be sold separately or otherwise conveyed separate from the principal dwelling unit on the lot.

**Conversion:** The conversion of a portion of an existing principal dwelling unit into an ADU or JADU may be permitted, provided all other regulations and development standards are complied with.

**Maximum Size:** The total combined gross floor area of the ADU or JADU cannot exceed the total gross floor area (as defined in Sec. 23-55(b)(8)) of the principal dwelling unit. The gross floor area for a JADU cannot exceed 500 square feet.

**Off-street Parking:** No additional off-street parking is required for an attached or detached ADU or JADU beyond what is required for the principal dwelling unit.

### Development Standards

**Size Requirements:** The proposed project must conform with all provisions of Sec. 23-43(i) which specify size regulations and standards for detached and attached accessory buildings and structures.

**Lot Coverage:** Attached and detached ADUs and JADUs must be included in the calculation of maximum lot coverage required in the underlying zoning district. The maximum lot coverage percentage as established for the underlying zoning district cannot be exceeded.

**Setbacks:** Whether attached or detached, ADUs and JADUs are subject to the same minimum front, side, and rear setbacks listed for principal permitted uses of the underlying zoning district. There are setback exceptions for nonconforming lots and corner lots.

### Design Requirements

**Orientation of Exterior Entry Doors and Stairways:** All new exterior entry doors constructed exclusively to serve an ADU or JADU are permitted to face the side and rear yard, only one (1) new entry door is permitted to face the front yard. Existing exterior entry doors located on the exterior façade of a principal dwelling unit or detached garage may be used to serve an ADU or JADU provided all applicable Building and Fire Codes are satisfied.

**Water Meter and Service Connections:** A new separate water meter and service connection to the public water main is not required for an ADU or JADU.

**Separate Electrical Service:** Detached ADUs must have a separate electric meter and electrical panel independent from the principal dwelling unit. Attached ADUs and JADUs are not required to have a new separate electric meter and electrical panel independent from the principal dwelling unit, however, the electrical panel located inside the principal dwelling unit must be accessible to all occupant(s).

Note: Not all regulations and standards are included on this handout. JADUs are subject to additional standards found in Sec. 23-56. regarding entry connections, kitchen areas, bathing and sanitation, etc. For more information, see Sec. 23-55 and Sec. 23-56 of the City of Appleton Municipal Code.

This image shows a full page of blank graph paper. The grid consists of small, equal-sized squares formed by thin black lines. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

**Scale: 1" =**                      ft



DEPARTMENT OF  
**COMMUNITY  
DEVELOPMENT**

# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

## Zoning Code Conformance Calculation Worksheet

### Property Information

Property Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Property Tax # \_\_\_\_\_ Zoning District \_\_\_\_\_ Maximum Lot Coverage \_\_\_\_\_

### Existing Conditions

#### Lot Dimensions

Lot Width \_\_\_\_\_ ft. Lot Length \_\_\_\_\_ ft. Lot Size \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.  
Gross Floor Area: Primary Dwelling Unit (Including Basement) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.  
Gross Floor Area: Primary Dwelling Unit (Excluding Basement) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.  
Gross Floor Area: Detached Accessory Structures \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.  
Gross Floor Area: Attached Accessory Structures \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.

### Proposed Conditions

1. Gross Floor Area: Primary Dwelling Unit (Including Basement) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
2. Gross Floor Area: Primary Dwelling Unit (Excluding Basement) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
3. Gross Floor Area: Detached Accessory Structures \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
4. Gross Floor Area: Attached Accessory Structures \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
5. Gross Floor Area: Detached and Attached Accessory Structures (Line 3. + Line 4.) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
6. Gross Floor Area: Detached ADU \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
7. Gross Floor Area: Attached ADU \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.

### Conformance Calculations

8. Total Gross Floor Area: Proposed ADU  
(Line 6. + Line 7.) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft. **Total cannot exceed:**  
(Line 2. - 1 sqft.) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
9. Total Gross Floor Area: All Proposed Detached Accessory  
Structures  
Line 3. + Line 6.) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft. **Total cannot exceed:**  
1,600 sqft. \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
10. Total Gross Floor Area: All Proposed Attached Accessory  
Structures  
(Line 4. + Line 7.) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft. **Total cannot exceed:**  
(Line 1. \* .35) or max  
1,600 sqft. \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
11. Total Gross Floor Area: All Proposed Accessory Structures  
(Line 5. + Line 8.) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft. **Total cannot exceed:**  
(Line 1. - 1 sqft.) \_\_\_\_\_ sqft.
12. Total Proposed Lot Coverage  
(Existing + proposed impervious surfaces / Lot Size) \_\_\_\_\_ % **Total cannot exceed:**  
Max of underlying  
zoning dist. \_\_\_\_\_ %



# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS

## Definitions

Sec. 23-22

**Accessory Use:** a use subordinate to and serving the principal use, building or structure on the same lot and customarily incidental thereto.

**Attached Building or Structure:** a building or structure, which is attached to another building or structure by a wall, a roof or by a continuous foundation.

**Building:** any structure having a roof that may provide shelter, support, protection or enclosure of persons, animals or property of any kind.

**Detached Building or Structure:** a freestanding building or structure and where all sides of the building or structure are surrounded by yards or open space on the same lot.

**Dwelling Unit:** means a residential building or portion thereof intended for occupancy by one (1) family, but not including hotels, motels, boarding or rooming houses or tourist homes

**Floor Area, Gross Floor Area:** the sum of the horizontal areas of all floors of a building or structure measured from the exterior face of the exterior walls, or from the centerline of a wall separating two (2) buildings but excluding any space where the floor-to-ceiling height is less than six (6) feet.

**Lot Coverage:** A ratio of the total impervious surfaces on a site divided by the gross area of the site

**Principal Use:** the primary or predominant use of any lot or parcel.

**Setback:** the required distance the exterior wall of a structure must be located from a lot line, easement, right-of way, adjacent building or other feature.

**Structure:** anything constructed or erected with a fixed location on the ground or attached or resting on something having a fixed location on the ground or anything assembled with a combination of materials to give support to something having a fixed location on the ground, including but not limited to off-street parking lots and loading areas, buildings, walls, fences, towers, outdoor lighting fixtures, signs and billboards.

Sec. 23-55(b)

**Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU):** an attached or a detached dwelling unit, which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more individuals and is located on a lot with a proposed or existing principal residential dwelling. It shall include permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking and sanitation on the same lot and in conjunction with an existing built or proposed to be built single-family detached dwelling or two-family-zero lot line dwelling.

**Attached Accessory Dwelling Unit:** a dwelling unit connected to (by a minimum of one shared wall), contained within or a combination of connected to and contained within the existing footprint of an existing built or proposed to be built single-family detached dwelling or two-family-zero lot line dwelling, including an attached garage.

**Detached Accessory Dwelling Unit:** a freestanding building and where all sides of the building are not connected to an existing built or proposed to be built single-family detached dwelling or two-family-zero lot line dwelling, including the conversion of or addition to any portion of an existing built or proposed to be built detached accessory building for the purpose of creating an accessory dwelling unit.

**Gross Floor Area:** the sum of the horizontal areas of all floors of a building measured from the exterior face of the exterior walls or from the centerline of a wall separating two (2) dwelling units, but not including finished and unfinished basement areas, attached and detached garages, and any space where the floor-to-ceiling height is less than six (6) feet.

**Independent Living Facilities:** a dwelling unit having permanent provisions of all of the following features: living, sleeping, eating, cooking, bathing and sanitation facilities.

**Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU):** a dwelling unit that is no more than 500 square feet in size, which provides complete independent living facilities for one or more individuals and is contained within or a combination of connected to and contained within an existing footprint of an existing built or proposed to be built single-family detached dwelling or two-family-zero lot line dwelling. It shall include permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, and cooking. However, a junior accessory dwelling unit may include bathing and sanitation facilities or may share bathing and sanitation facilities with the principal residential dwelling unit.