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FROM CT.ORG: YOU KNOW A TREND IS SECURE WHEN THE NATION'S MAJOR HOME SELLING RETAILER BEGINS TO DESCRIBE HOW AND WHERE YOU CAN HAVE AN ADU.

LIFE AT HOME

What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) - and Tips for Building One

Before building an accessory dwelling unit on your property, consider these legal, design and financial implications.



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Accessory dwelling units or ADUs — those separate living units tucked inside a single family home or sharing land with one — are having a rock star moment.

Dozens of cities and counties, and at least nine states, including [California](#), have changed or adopted laws that make it easier and more attractive for homeowners to build ADUs.

For homeowners, ADUs can be a source of rental income or serve as living quarters for adult children or extended family, a work-at-home space, a place to escape to or run a home-based business.

Still, there are still enough challenges involved in building one that ADU author and advocate [Kol Peterson](#) said they're usually undertaken only by homeowners with the motivation, money, knowledge and confidence to see the project through.

For those willing and able to build an ADU, he said, the rewards can be substantial.

What is an ADU?

An ADU can be:

- a newly constructed stand-alone structure
- a home addition that creates a separate living quarter
- conversion of an existing space such as garage or basement into a separate dwelling

ADUs are commonly known by other names, including in-law apartment, granny flat, casitas or backyard cottage. Once common prior to World War II, they are considered a more affordable source of housing because they can be built without having to purchase land — usually the biggest component of housing prices, especially in expensive coastal cities.

“ADUs are still a unique housing type,” said Peterson, who [teaches](#) and writes a comprehensive blog on the subject. He’s also authored “Backdoor Revolution: The Definitive Guide to ADU Development,” a book for homeowners considering building one.

Changes in state and local laws could speed up the construction of ADUs and streamline the process for building them.

If you're thinking about building an ADU, or buying a home with the intention of building an ADU for rental income or multi-generational living, here are some things to consider.

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