

## Sharing Habitat 401: Accessory Dwelling

### *Build an accessory dwelling unit*

Build an accessory dwelling unit (ADU) to provide additional housing on a single-family lot. Begin with thorough research into local regulations, which vary dramatically between jurisdictions.

Choose a smaller footprint (300-400 square feet) plan with a simple layout to minimize construction costs while maximizing energy efficiency. Prioritize superinsulation with recycled or natural materials like cellulose or wool insulation. Incorporate passive solar design by orienting windows for winter heat gain and summer shading. Power essential loads with a solar module and power bank, starting small with the option to expand later. Harvest rainwater from the roof for toilets and gardens. For structures built on site, use reclaimed wood, windows, doors, and fixtures from architectural salvage stores. For heating and cooling, use an air-to-air mini-split heat pump.

### Sharing Habitat 401: Equipment, Materials and Costs

- Property deed and zoning information
- Budget for construction (\$50,000-\$300,000)
- General contractor (unless self-building)

### Sharing Habitat 401: Steps

1. Research local regulations, including setbacks and permits required
2. Develop your project plan and establish your budget
3. Design your ADU: work with architect/designer or select pre-approved plans
4. Secure financing
5. Obtain permits
6. Prepare site and construct foundation
  - Mark utility lines
  - Install erosion controls
  - Grade site, excavate, and install footings and foundation
  - Install drainage systems
7. Build exterior of structure
8. Install utilities
  - Connect to existing electric utility or use solar power
  - Connect to sewer or septic, or use a composting or incinerating toilet
9. Finish interior and install fixtures and appliances
10. Complete exterior and landscaping
11. Pass inspections

### Sharing Habitat 401: Definitions

- **Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU):** Second self-contained housing unit on a single-family lot
- **Certificate of Occupancy:** Official document certifying a building is safe for occupancy
- **Detached ADU:** Standalone structure separate from main house
- **Junior ADU (JADU):** Smaller ADU created within an existing structure
- **Setback:** Required minimum distance between structure and property lines

### Sharing Habitat 401: Troubleshooting

Problem	Solutions
Zoning restrictions	Get a variance. Build an in-law apartment instead.