



# ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT (ADU) PROGRAM FOR SINGLE-FAMILY HOMES

Please note that there are several State bills effective January 1, 2020. The Planning Department is working to determine how these impact current laws. Generally, we believe these may offer additional opportunities or further relief from Planning Code requirements. By filing your ADU application now, you acknowledge that there may be minor revisions requested to align with State and local laws. Please reach out to [CPC.ADU@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.ADU@sfgov.org) for additional details.

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs), also called secondary units, in-law units, or cottages, are subordinate units added to existing residential buildings. All single-family homes in San Francisco's zoning districts that permit residential uses are eligible to add one ADU. Adding an ADU to your property can provide several benefits, such as providing housing for family members, simplifying your lifestyle, and increased financial flexibility. For more information on the benefits of ADUs, please see our video, "Are ADUs Right For You?" on our website at [sf-planning.org/accessory-dwelling-units](http://sf-planning.org/accessory-dwelling-units).

This fact sheet describes Single-Family Homes ADU Program, which is governed by Planning Code Section 207(c)(6). If you are the owner of a multi-unit building and interested in the ADU program, please consult , the [ADU Fact Sheet for Multi-Unit Buildings](#). Please be aware that recent amendments were made to the Planning Code that may offer more flexibility to your project.

This fact sheet is intended to distribute helpful information; however, please consult a Planner for a more detailed review and discussion before applying for a building permit. Key ADU Planners are available at the ADU Planning Counter (First Floor of 1660 Mission Street). You may also email [CPC.ADU@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.ADU@sfgov.org) if you have further questions.

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## How many ADUs can I add to my property?

Properties containing a single-family home may construct one (1) ADU. A new single family home may incorporate one new ADU into the project.

If your home is eligible for the Voluntary Seismic Retrofit Program, you may be eligible to add more than one ADU. For more information on the Voluntary Seismic Retrofit Program, please visit [sfdbi.org/ADU](http://sfdbi.org/ADU).

## Where can I put an ADU in my home?

ADUs can be proposed as part of a project for a new single family home. Most ADUs are constructed in existing storage or garage spaces. Single-family homes may add one ADU anywhere within the buildable area of the lot, which means the entire lot minus all required setbacks and yards. For more information on what the buildable area of your property is, please review [Zoning Administrator Bulletin No. 5](#), or consult with a Planner.

This means that ADUs can be added as an expansion to the existing building, by taking space from your existing home, or by constructing a new structure within the buildable area of the lot. If an expansion of your building is proposed to construct your ADU, neighborhood notice (Section 311) and design review will be required.

**What code requirements do I need to know about?**

The most common requirements include permeability and landscaping in your required front setback, and street tree planting or payment of the in-lieu fee (under the regulations of Public Works); all other Code requirements must be met. Certain impact fees, such as a child care impact fee, may be assessed for the project if your proposal includes the removal of vehicle parking spaces or excavation. No parking is required for the ADU under this program.

**Will my ADU be rent controlled?**

ADUs added to existing single family homes will not be subject to rent control, unless a “waiver” from a Planning Code requirement, such as the open space or exposure requirement, is granted. Please contact a Planner for more information on ADU “waivers”.

**Can I use my ADU for short-term rentals?**

No. Accessory Dwelling Units are ineligible for the Short Term Rental program.

**Can I Sell my ADU?**

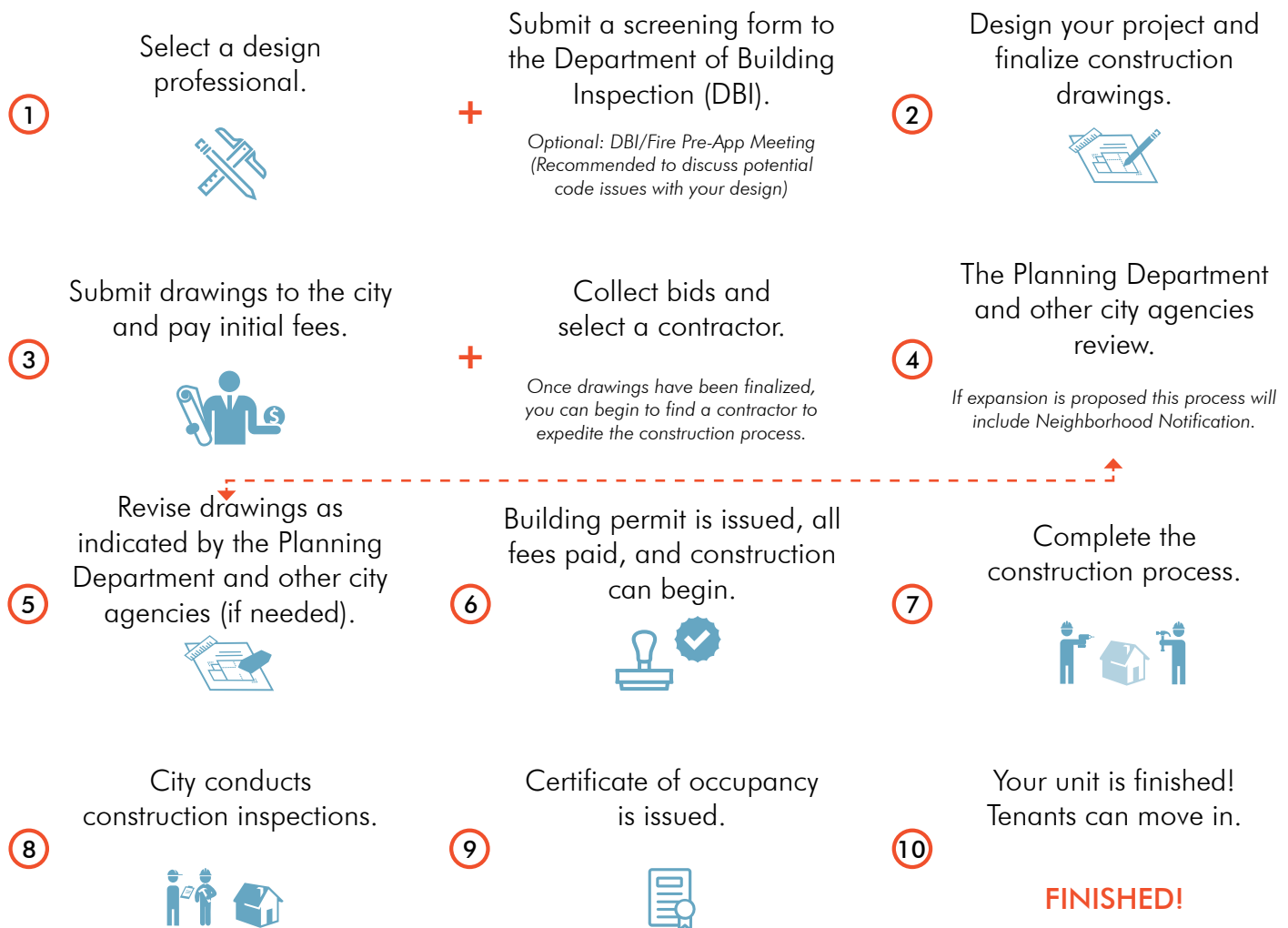
No; ADUs under this program cannot be subdivided and sold separately.

## Review Process: What's involved?

If the proposed ADU is within the existing built area of your single-family home, the review process will be straightforward and should take less than 120 days. Planning will review and provide comments at the counter.

If the proposed ADU includes an addition to the existing home for an ADU, this will likely be reviewed by all City agencies within four months, and neighborhood notification is not required for ADUs 1,200 square feet or smaller. If the proposed ADU is proposed in conjunction with construction of a new home plus ADU, neighbors within 150 feet of the subject property and relevant neighborhood groups must be notified for a 30-day public review period; the timing of this will vary. The Discretionary Review process will also apply, similar to all other expansion permits reviewed by the Planning Department.

## NEXT STEPS



## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

### **Zoning:**

Find your zoning using the Property Information Map at <http://propertymap.sfplanning.org>

### **Rent Control:**

Find out if your building is under rent control by contacting the San Francisco Tenants Union at [www.sftu.org/rentcontrol](http://www.sftu.org/rentcontrol) or learn more about Rent Control from the San Francisco Rent Board at [www.sfrb.org](http://www.sfrb.org)

### **Historic Preservation:**

Depending on the age of your building and its historic resource status, your ADU may be subject to historic preservation review most likely through the building permit plan review process, if your project includes changes to the front facade of the building. Visit <http://sf-planning.org/historic-preservation-faqs> for more information. Email [CPC.ADU@sfgov.org](mailto:CPC.ADU@sfgov.org) to learn more about designing your project and if any special review may apply to your property, and review the ADU Handbook for guidance.

### **Building Code Requirements:**

All life safety requirements under the San Francisco Building Code must be met during ADU construction. These requirements can affect the design of your ADU and should be considered from the beginning of the process. Please visit <http://sfdbi.org/ADU> for more information.



### **ADU Handbook:**

The ADU Handbook contains detailed information regarding the ADU construction process, the Building and Planning Codes, potential designs, and financial feasibility. You can download the handbook at: <http://sf-planning.org/accessory-dwelling-unit>.

### **Questions? Please Contact:**

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\*Inquiries about ADU Screening Form