



ADU FOR U

LITTLE ROCK ADU DESIGN COMPETITION

Help shape the future of housing in Little Rock

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) can provide:

- Affordable housing options
- Aging-in-place opportunities
- Multigenerational living
- More housing choices in existing neighborhoods

Why participate?

Help expand housing options while showcasing your design skills and contributing to a more resilient, inclusive city.

All levels of experience welcome

*guidelines and restrictions detailed within.

First Place:

\$1,000

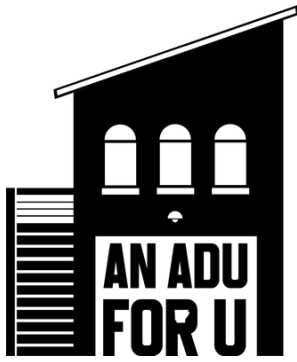
Submission Deadline
August 7, 2026

Apply at:
ourlittlerock.org

Brought to you by:

AARP
Arkansas





LITTLE ROCK ADU DESIGN COMPETITION GUIDELINES

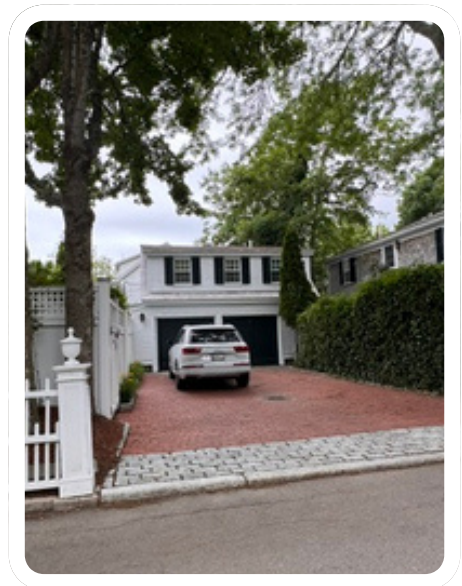
Introduction

Our Little Rock, in partnership with AARP Arkansas, is excited to announce that we are holding an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) Design Competition to inspire creative, new housing designs that will give Little Rock residents more affordable, age-friendly housing choices!

This competition is an opportunity for architects, engineers, and designers of all ages and skill levels to showcase their talents.

The goals of this competition are to:

- 1. Increase ADU Awareness and Access:** Educate the community about the benefits of ADUs and what is possible across income levels and family configurations.
- 2. Spotlight Little Rock's New ADU Ordinance:** Introduce the community to recent guidelines that legalize ADUs and identify areas to further unlock ADU development citywide.
- 3. Champion Age-Friendly Design:** Educate leaders, builders, and the public on design that lets people age in place or live near loved ones.



OVERVIEW



What is an ADU?

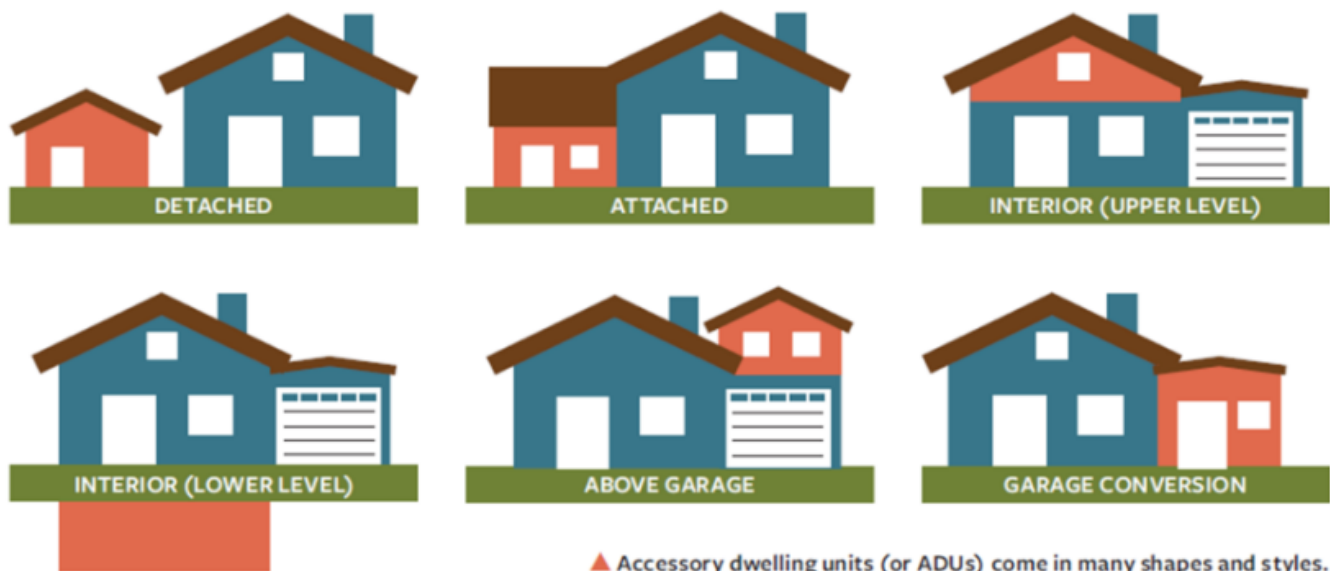
A smaller, secondary home built on the same lot as an existing home. Flexible enough to be a first apartment, a place for an aging parent, or caregiver.

ADUs are self contained living spaces that contain their own kitchen or kitchenette, bathroom, and sleeping area.

Also called:

- In-law suites
- Granny flats
- Backyard cottages
- Casitas
- Carriage houses

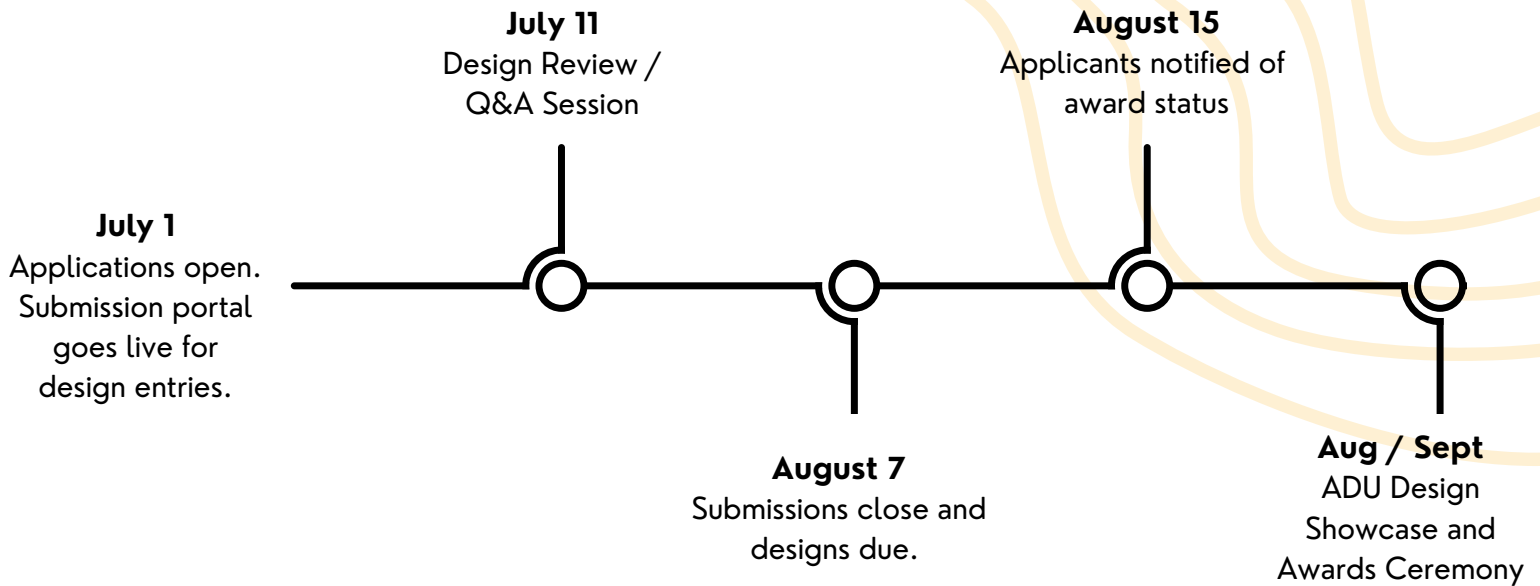
ADUs let aging adults downsize without leaving their neighborhood, live near family for support, or house a caregiver on-site – supporting independence, social connection, and affordable aging in place.



Types of accessory dwelling units (ADUs). Source: AARP.org

An ADU can be detached from, attached to, or built within the primary residence. It can be converted from existing structures or new builds.

COMPETITION TIMELINE



PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Eligibility

Submissions are welcome from both professionals and non-professionals, including students, emerging designers, licensed architects, and builders. While anyone in Arkansas is eligible to participate, preference may be given to those who live or work in Central Arkansas, especially the Little Rock area.

Submission Instructions

All submissions must be submitted by 11:59 PM CST on August 7th with all required documents and information. Late or incomplete submissions will not be accepted. Applications can be submitted [via the online portal linked here](#). Submission packets must be in one compiled PDF format. Please email all questions to hello@ourlittlerock.org.

Awards

A panel of judges will review and score all submissions, and winners will be notified of award status by email by August 15, 2026. Winning designs will be selected and announced publicly at an ADU Design Showcase and Awards Ceremony in August/September. four (4) winning designs: First Place (\$1000), Second Place (\$500), Third Place (\$300), Best Student Entry (\$200).

Design Requirements



All designs **must be detached or an attached ADU addition**, meet site conditions, and include the following elements:

- **Kitchen:** must include a sink with running water, food storage area, cooktop, and food preparation space
- **Bathroom:** must include a toilet, sink, and shower or tub with running water
- **Sleeping Area:** at least one sleeping area must be included
- **Separate Entrance:** independent access points that are not shared with the main home
- **At least three (3) Universal Design Features:** identified in the attached Universal Design Checklist

Criteria	Requirement
ADU Size	400 - 1,000 SF
Height	17 ft for standalone or attached 1-story addition, 27 ft if above a garage or 2-story attached
Setback	5 ft from primary structure, 8 ft side, and 25 ft front & back

Submission Requirements

Variations of the same design may be submitted but each variation **must** have its own individual PDF submission packet.

All submissions must include the following elements to be eligible for consideration:

- Digital Presentation Board:** Submit a visual overview of your ADU design in the form of 1 to 3 pages, formatted horizontally (landscape) on 11" x 17" pages.
 - Minimum resolution: 200 dpi
 - File Format: PDF
 - File Size Limit: 10MB
- Required visuals include:
 - **Rendering of the ADU:** A digital sketch, 3D model, or illustration to help visualize the completed structure.
 - **Floor Plan:** A scaled interior layout showing room sizes, placement of doors and windows, and circulation. Include basic dimensions.
 - **Site Plan:** A layout showing the ADU on a representative 50' x 150' lot, including placement relative to the main house, setbacks, and access.



Submission Requirements (continued)

2. **Project Narrative:** Submit a written narrative (500 words max) to tell the story behind your design and what inspired it, how it solves problems, and what makes it unique or valuable to Little Rock homeowners.
 - Project Title
 - A clear explanation of how your design addresses the competition goals and scoring criteria (including, affordability, accessibility, buildability, and fit within the community).
3. **Preview Image:** Upload one image that best represents your project that is high-quality and suitable for promotional use.
 - Horizontal orientation
 - Minimum size: 2,000 x 1,680 pixels
 - Format: .png
4. **Anonymity Requirement:** Please do not include your name, logo, or any identifying information on your design board, preview image, or narrative. All entries will be judged anonymously to ensure fairness.



ADU REGULATIONS (CITY OF LITTLE ROCK, AR ZONING ORDINANCE NO. 22,647)



1. **Definition:** An ADU is a self-contained unit with its own cooking, sleeping, and sanitation facilities, subordinate to a larger primary structure on the same lot.
2. **By-right permission:** ADUs are now a permitted use by right on single-family lots, in every zoning district (no special approval needed if standards are met).
3. **One per lot:** Maximum of one ADU per lot, accessory to a single-family dwelling that's larger than the ADU.
4. **Build sequencing:** A detached ADU can't be built or occupied before the primary house exists, unless the Planning Director approves temporary use during construction.
5. **Will-serve letter:** Required from applicable water and wastewater utilities before an ADU can move forward.
6. **General code compliance:** All other applicable municipal code requirements still apply, unless they contradict state law (A.C.A. § 14-56-205).
7. **Location standard:** ADU may be attached, detached, or internal to the primary home. It must meet the same setback requirements as single-family dwellings in that zoning district.
8. **Area standard:** Max of 75% of the primary dwelling's gross floor area, or 1,000 sq ft, whichever is smaller.
9. **Lot coverage standard:** Must conform to the single-family lot coverage rules of the applicable zoning district.
10. **Height standard:** Can't exceed the height limit of the applicable zoning district (no separate, lower ADU cap).
11. **Variance path:** ADUs that don't meet standards 7–10 go through the standard variance process via the Board of Adjustments (Sec. 36-69-70). Approval isn't guaranteed, even on lots with prior unrelated variances.
12. **Regulatory hierarchy:** This section overrides any more restrictive Chapter 36 regulation, and is itself overridden by any more permissive one. This section controls either way for by-right ADUs.

ADU REGULATIONS (CITY OF LITTLE ROCK, AR ZONING ORDINANCE NO. 22,647) - CONT.



13. Additional/non-conforming units: A

second ADU, or one accessory to a non-single-family structure, doesn't get by-right treatment and falls back to standard code.

14. Short-term rental compliance: ADUs

must still comply with Little Rock's short-term rental ordinance (Sec. 36-601).

15. Parking exemption: Normally 1.0

space per accessory dwelling unit is required, except ADUs permitted under this by-right section, which require zero parking spaces.

R-2 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT ZONING



Common Permitted Use

Single Family Homes. One (1) single-family dwelling on any lot or parcel.

Setback Requirements

Setback Type	Requirement
Front	25 feet
Side	8 feet
Rear	25 feet

Height Limits

Max Height	35 feet
Max Stories	2

Lot Coverage

Lot Area: $\geq 6,000$ square feet; min width: 50 feet; minimum depth: 100 feet

Max Coverage: 35%

Parking Requirements

Single-family: 2 spaces per dwelling unit. Attached or detached garage standard.

Multi-family: 1.5 spaces per unit; 1 space for one-bedroom units.

Source: Little Rock Code of Ordinances Chapter 36 (Zoning); Little Rock Building Code.

SCORING CRITERIA



The following scoring criteria will be used by the judging panel to evaluate design submissions that support aging-in-place.

Universal Design & Accessibility - 50%

Evaluated on how well the design supports safe, comfortable, independent living for people of all ages and abilities. Priority given to aging-in-place features (step-free entries, wide doorways, accessible bathrooms, lever hardware, adequate lighting), adaptability for a variety of residents, and overall design quality and livability.

Construction - 25%

Evaluated on feasibility, affordability, and compliance with the Little Rock ADU ordinance and site conditions. Priority given to cost-effective materials, efficient construction methods, craftsmanship, and sustainable practices – especially innovative approaches that lower upfront or long-term costs and make ADU construction more accessible to low- and moderate-income homeowners. Bonus points for energy efficiency and waste reduction.

Context - 20%

Designs will be evaluated on how well they respond to site and neighborhood context – including buildability on a variety of lot sizes across Little Rock, compatibility with existing structures, and orientation that provides both privacy and natural light. Priority will go to designs that demonstrate flexibility across different lot conditions and neighborhood contexts while meeting City zoning regulations, serving a broad range of households and communities without major alterations.

Presentation - 5%

The application package is organized, visually appealing and well-written. The images and concepts can be understood by design-build professionals as well as community members.

QUESTION?



Contact Us!

Email: HELLO@OURLITTLEROCK.ORG

The ADU Design Competition Committee

- Chloe Chapman, Our Little Rock - Project Lead
- Patricia Fry, AARP Arkansas - Project Sponsor, ADU Showcase + Ceremony
- CJ Brady, City of Little Rock Sustainability Commission - Communications
- Morgan Weithman, Quapaw Quarter Association - Applications
- Kathy Wells, Coalition of Little Rock Neighborhoods - Judge Recruitment
- Blake Tierney, City of Little Rock Age Friendly Commission - Technical Advisor
- Bobby Matthews, AB Property Holdings - Technical Advisor
- Justin Vess - Little Rock Downtown Neighborhood Association - Technical Advisor
- Chris Burks - University of Arkansas of Little Rock, Public Policy Department - Technical Advisor

About Our Little Rock

Our Little Rock is a civic nonprofit dedicated to advancing walkable, people-oriented urbanism and fostering a more connected, vibrant and resilient Little Rock through advocacy, education and public engagement.

About AARP Arkansas

AARP Arkansas works to improve the quality of life for Arkansans age 50 and older through advocacy, education and community initiatives that support health, financial security and livable communities. Learn more at aarp.org/states/arkansas.