

Your experts in Aging Well in King and south Snohomish Counties

Learn more at www.AgingWisdom.com

Wondering about an ADU?



With many older adults wishing to age in place, demand is growing for innovative housing options. An ADU—accessory dwelling unit—is a small, separate living space built on the same property as a single-family home. You may know them as in-law suites, granny pods, or casitas. ADUs offer options as housing needs change over time. They can generate rental income, host visitors, or offer a place for a caregiver.

You may even plan to downsize into one yourself, perhaps located in the backyard of a family member's home. If that idea appeals to you, take time for detailed consideration of the pros and cons and discuss them with your family. How might the arrangement change the dynamics between you? Would there be enough privacy? Who would cover the cost of the building? Would you pay rent? If you decide to go forward, it would be wise to draw up a written agreement so everyone is clear about what's expected.

If you'd like to stay in your current home but are looking ahead to a time when you need more help, an ADU could potentially serve as housing for a caregiver. Pursuing that option means weighing the benefits against the cost of building and the time spent overseeing the project. Down the road you would also be in charge of managing a caregiver or tenant, which is no small task. Would there be outside support available if you weren't able to do it yourself?

Building and zoning basics. There are several ways to add an ADU. You can convert a garage or basement, build an addition, or purchase a prefabricated unit. Many builders now create modern, energy-efficient units designed with aging in place in mind. Features known as "universal design" make them safer and more comfortable as you age. They include things such as no-step entries, wide hallways, and easy-to-use bathrooms. Garage conversions work well because they usually start at ground level.

But before you begin anything, it's important to check with the local city or county department of housing. Rules and permitting requirements vary widely. Most cities don't allow ADUs to be used as short-term vacation rentals, but many do support them as a way to create affordable housing and help older adults stay in their homes. However, permits, parking requirements, and utility costs can all affect your timeline and budget.

When thoughtfully designed and well integrated into your long-term goals, an ADU is more than a structure—it's a strategy.

Want help planning to age in place?

Call the experts in aging well at 206-456-5155.



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206-456-5155

Aging Wisdom supports individuals and families in King and south Snohomish Counties as they plan for aging.



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