

ADU Rules Snapshot

Culpeper, Fauquier, Rappahannock, Madison, Town of Culpeper, and Town of Warrenton

For REALTOR® reference only • Verify zoning, permits, HOA rules, septic capacity, and legal status before marketing a property as ADU-eligible.



1 Culpeper County

Approval path:
Limited and use-specific

- No simple countywide ADU process.
- In-home "mother-in-law suite": 1 allowed; owner must live on site; for relatives or caregivers.
- Size: up to 30% of home or 1,000 sq. ft., whichever is greater.
- Detached "tenant unit" may be possible, but acreage/zoning thresholds apply.



Most restrictive / property-specific



2 Fauquier County

Approval path:
Administrative permit

- ADUs may be internal, attached, detached, or in an accessory structure.
- Typical limit: 800 sq. ft., 2 bedrooms, 3 occupants.
- Can be larger in some rural settings or older-dwelling conversions.
- Owner occupancy required.



Most straightforward path



3 Rappahannock County

Approval path:
Special exception

- Allowed in certain districts with discretionary approval.
- 1 ADU per parcel.
- Max size: 1,200 sq. ft.
- New ADU generally must be within 200 feet of the main residence.



Public-hearing / timing risk



4 Madison County

Approval path:
By right in R-1, R-2, and R-3

- Ordinance adopted Oct. 7, 2026.
- 1 ADU per qualifying parcel with a primary residence.
- Allowed by right in R-1, R-2, and R-3 districts.
- No added parking requirement.
- No owner-occupancy requirement.
- No separate sale; no rentals under 30 days.
- A-1 and C-1 are not included at this time.



New ordinance adopted



5 Town of Culpeper

Approval path:
Conditional use permit

- Allowed in residential districts with approval.
- 1 ADU per lot; lot generally at least 10,000 sq. ft.
- Max size: 1,000 sq. ft.; 1–2 bedrooms; 2 occupants.
- Requires paved off-street parking; uses main home water/sewer services.



Possible, but not by right



6 Town of Warrenton

Approval path:
Special use permit

- Allowed in R-10 and R-15 districts.
- Owner must live in main home or ADU.
- Size: at least 500 sq. ft. and no more than 25% of main dwelling area.
- At least 3 off-street parking spaces required.



Feasibility varies by lot



Quick Takeaways for Agents

- ✓ Fauquier County offers a clear administrative path.
- ✓ Madison County now allows ADUs by right in R-1, R-2, and R-3.
- ✓ Rappahannock, the Town of Culpeper, and Warrenton still require discretionary approval.
- ✓ Culpeper County remains the most property-specific.
- ✓ Madison may later consider A-1 and C-1 expansion.

