WHAT DEFINES A JUNIOR UNIT?

- Located in an existing single-family dwelling
- Created within an existing, legal bedroom
- Maximum size of 500 sq. ft.
- Has an efficiency kitchen
- Has a separate exterior entrance
- Still has the interior door to the house
- Private or shared bathroom okay
- No extra parking required!
- May be rented, but no short-term rental is allowed.

Sonoma County now allows Junior Units in unincorporated areas of the county! These are small living units created within a bedroom in an existing house.

Sample Efficiency Kitchen

County of Sonoma

www.sonoma-county.org/accessoryunits
Location

Junior accessory dwelling units are allowed within an existing single-family dwelling in the following zoning districts.

- LIA (Land Intensive Agriculture)
- LEA (Land Extensive Agriculture)
- DA (Diverse Agriculture)
- RRD (Resources and Rural Development)
- TP (Timber Production)
- AR (Agricultural Residential)
- RR (Rural Residential)
- R1 (Low Density Residential)
- R2 (Medium Density Residential)
- R3 (High Density Residential)
- PC (Planned Community)
- CO (Administrative and Professional Office)
- C1 (Neighborhood Commercial)
- C2 (Retail Business and Service)
- C3 (General Commercial)
- LC (Limited Commercial)
- CR (Commercial Rural)
- AS (Agricultural Services)
- K (Recreation and Visitor-Serving Commercial)
- MP (Industrial Park)
- M1 (Limited Urban Industrial)
- M2 (Heavy Industrial)
- M3 (Limited Rural Industrial)

Permits and Fees

- Most junior units are approved over the counter with just a building permit.
- Junior units are not separate dwelling units and don’t require building or fire code upgrades or separate utility connections.
- Junior units don’t pay impact fees, such as traffic and school fees.
- Junior units must be connected to a septic system or the sewer.

Did you know?

- You can install connecting doors, like a hotel, to provide more security and reduce noise.

Use

- Junior units may be rented separately.
- Junior units may not be rented on a transient occupancy basis (less than 30 days), so they cannot be used as vacation rentals.
- The owner must live in the house or junior unit. This does not apply if the house is owned by a public agency, land trust, or non-profit housing organization.

Did you know?

You can have a junior unit and accessory unit on the same parcel.

- A junior unit must be installed after construction of the single family dwelling.
- One junior unit is allowed per parcel.

Quick Tip

Consider putting the junior unit on a separate electrical circuit for convenience.