



WASHINGTON STATE'S 2019 ACCESSORY DWELLING UNITS BILL, HB 1797 & SB 5812

Freedom for Washington neighborhoods to create modest, affordable home choices like backyard cottages and mother-in-law apartments.

February 2019

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What is Washington's 2019 Accessory Dwelling Unit Bill?

Washington state legislators in the House and Senate are sponsoring a bill ([HB 1797/SB 5812](#)), giving homeowners more freedom and flexibility across the state to add Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs)—backyard cottages, granny flats, basement apartments, and mother-in-law suites.

The bill would permit the following things in Washington cities of 2,500 people or more, and within urban growth areas:

- Permit two ADUs wherever there is a single, detached house, duplex, triplex, or townhome
- Eliminate off-street parking, owner-occupancy, and minimum lot size requirements.
- Cap impact fees at 50 percent of rates for single-family homes
- Set utility connection fees and capacity charges in proportion to ADU's burden
- Increase design flexibility via more generous setback, height, and size limits

Core messages: Why does this solution matter?

Affordability

High rent and home prices drive people out of Washington communities. Adding modest, affordable homes to existing neighborhoods is an important tool to protect communities where all kinds of families, of all incomes, can afford to live.

Shared opportunity

Where we live shapes our lives and our long-term success--from the length and cost of our commute, where we shop for groceries, and our children's schools. Modestly priced housing options can provide more equitable access to jobs, schools, transit, and parks.

Flexibility for all stages of life

Backyard cottages or basement apartments give homeowners more flexibility to age in community, care for family members, earn income from a small rental, or support a young adult just starting out.

Access to jobs and economic security for families

Workforce housing near places people work strengthens middle-class and low-income families and helps communities thrive.

Sustainability

Small apartments that are convenient for transit, jobs, schools, and amenities are a tool in the fight against climate change. Adding housing choices in existing neighborhoods near these amenities prevents sprawl, cuts traffic and commute times, and tames infrastructure needs. ADUs are compact, making them remarkably energy efficient, cutting lifetime CO₂ emissions by as much as 40 percent compared to a typical single, detached home.

Washington can be a model for greener, more affordable communities

This is the most progressive accessory dwelling unit proposal legislators from any state have ever had the opportunity to vote on. Washington legislators can take leadership to give all jurisdictions the chance to pitch in and do their part to create more green and affordable housing options that work for families across the state.

Thanks to Sightline's communications associate, Kelsey Hamlin, senior communications manager Ed Guzman, and housing affordability policy team, Dan Bertolet, Nisma Gabobe, Madeline Kovacs, Alan Durning, Margaret Morales, and Michael Andersen. For more information, contact Anna Fahey, at anna@sightline.org.