



Granny Pods (ADUs) for Seniors: Print-Friendly Toolkit

What this is: A set of checklists and worksheets to plan a backyard home for an older adult with fewer surprises.

1-Page Quick Decision Cheat Sheet

- **Best fit:** privacy + closeness to family, mostly independent with occasional help.
- **Often not a fit:** needs 24/7 skilled nursing now, or the lot/HOA rules block ADUs.

2026 Reality Check (typical ranges)

All-in project cost (unit + permits + site work + utilities)	\$100,000–\$300,000+ (varies by location and utility distance)
Timeline (first call to move-in)	4–8 months (permits are often the longest step)
Most-missed costs	Trenching + hookups, panel upgrades, drainage/soil work, accessibility upgrades

Before You Spend Money: 8 questions to ask

- Is an ADU allowed on this lot (zoning + setbacks + height + size)?
- Are HOA/deed restrictions a blocker?
- Are separate meters required? Will the electrical panel need an upgrade?
- How far is water/sewer from the build site (trenching cost)?
- What permit + plan check + impact fees apply here?
- What accessibility specs are included (door widths, shower, grab-bar blocking)?
- Who pulls permits and schedules inspections?
- What is the care plan if health changes (home care vs move)?

Source article: <https://grantsforseniors.org/granny-pods/>



Quick Action Plan (Idea to Move-In)

Use this page as a simple roadmap and a place to capture notes from calls.

Step 1 (today): Health + safety snapshot

Mobility needs, fall risks, meds support, emergency contacts.

Step 2 (this week): Call planning department

Ask for ADU handout, setbacks, parking rules, fee schedule, realistic permit timeline.

Step 3 (this week): Utility reality check

Meters, electrical panel capacity, sewer/water connection feasibility.

Step 4 (week 1–2): Build an all-in budget

Unit + permits + site work + utilities + accessibility + 10–20% contingency.

Step 5 (week 2–4): Get 2–3 itemized bids

Ensure apples-to-apples scope: foundation, delivery/set, trenching allowance, finishes.

Step 6 (before deposit): Write the family agreement

Costs, caregiving roles, privacy rules, future use of the unit.

Step 7 (months 2–8): Permits, build, inspections, move-in

Schedule inspections early; plan a backup option if approvals drag.

Call Notes (fill in)

[] City/county planning contact name + phone: _____

[] ADU size limit + setbacks on this lot: _____

[] Permit fees estimate: _____

[] Utility requirements (meters/panel/sewer): _____

[] Estimated permit review time: _____



Safety & Accessibility Checklist

Print this page and use it while reviewing plans or walking through a finished unit.

Entry + Paths

- Zero-step entry or ramp-ready landing (no high thresholds).
- Exterior path is level, slip-resistant, and well-lit (motion lights).
- Handrails on any steps/ramps; ramp slope feels safe.

Doors + Layout

- Doorways wide enough for mobility devices (target 34–36 inch clear opening where possible).
- Clear turning space near bedroom and bathroom; no tight pinch points.
- Night lighting planned for bedroom-to-bath route.

Bathroom (highest risk area)

- Curbless or low-threshold shower entry.
- Blocking installed for grab bars (even if bars added later).
- Non-slip shower floor + handheld shower head.
- Anti-scald control on shower/faucets.

Kitchen + Living

- Smoke + CO alarms installed and tested.
- Good task lighting and uncluttered walking paths.
- Stable seating and easy-to-reach storage (reduce climbing).

Emergency Plan

- Emergency contacts posted in large print and saved in phone.
- Missed check-in plan: who calls, when, and what happens next.
- Entry plan for caregivers/EMS if resident cannot open the door.



Budget & Vendor Quote Worksheet

Use this page to compare bids and keep costs from hiding in fine print.

All-In Budget Lines (fill in)

- Base unit (structure + build): \$_____
- Permits + plan check + impact fees: \$_____
- Foundation/slab/piers: \$_____
- Utility trenching + hookups: \$_____
- Electrical panel upgrade (if needed): \$_____
- Accessibility upgrades: \$_____
- Drainage/paths/landscaping: \$_____
- Contingency (10–20%): \$_____
- Total estimated all-in cost:** \$_____

Vendor Questions (ask every bidder)

- What is included (delivery/set, foundation, appliances, finishes, ramps/stairs)?
- Who pulls permits and manages inspections?
- Utility scope: trenching allowance and what triggers change orders?
- Accessibility specs included (door widths, shower type, grab-bar blocking)?
- Warranty terms, service response time, and local repair process?
- Payment schedule (avoid full payment upfront).

Family Agreement Prompts (write it down)

- Who owns the unit and who pays which costs?
- Who provides care and what happens if needs increase?
- What is the plan if the senior moves out (guest suite, rental where legal, caregiver room)?