




Want to Build a Casita?

A Casita (also known as an ADU, or Accessory Dwelling Unit) is a secondary residential unit that can be added to a lot with an existing home. Casitas are independent units that have their own kitchen, bathrooms, living and sleeping space. They can be attached or detached from the primary residence, or they can be garage conversions. They must have a permanent foundation and a cool roof.

 In December 2021, the City of Tucson adopted Ordinance 11890 to allow casitas. Before then, many backyard dwellings were not allowed to be built with a kitchen.



See page 2 for information about an Amnesty Program

Standards and guidelines for properties in Historic Preservation Zones (HPZs) or Neighborhood Preservation Zones (NPZs) should be followed in addition to the guidance below.

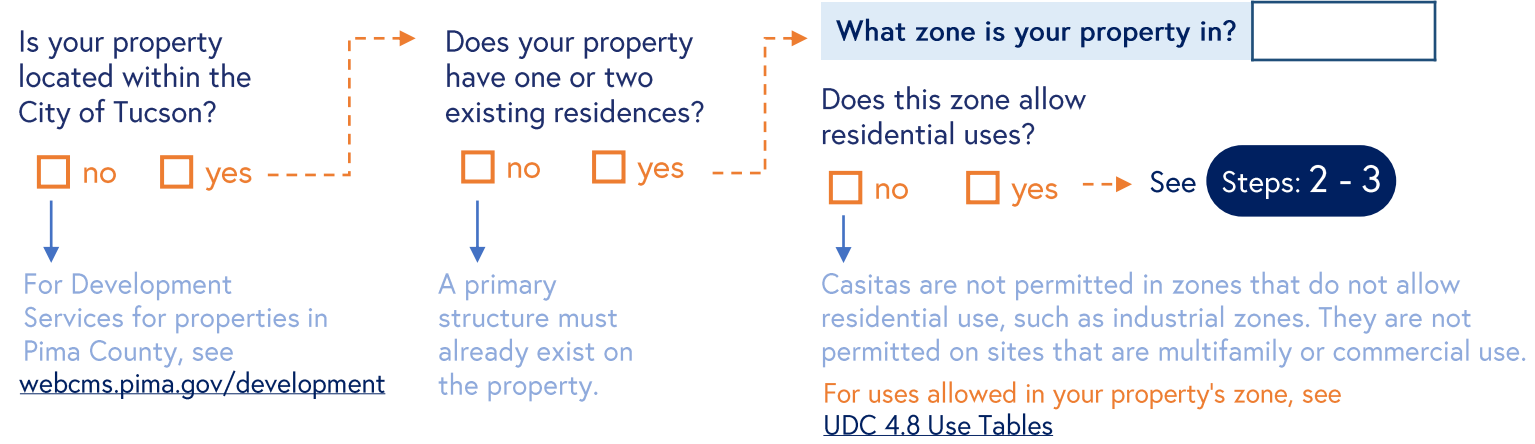
Worksheet

Follow the steps below to determine eligibility and applicable standards for permitting and building a casita on your property.



- Step 1:** Determine whether your property is eligible to build a casita.
- Step 2:** Design your casita.
- Step 3:** Apply for a permit.

Step 1: Determine if your property is eligible to build a casita.



References:

-  Look up your property address and zone [Map Tucson](#)
-  For references to the UDC [Unified Development Code](#)

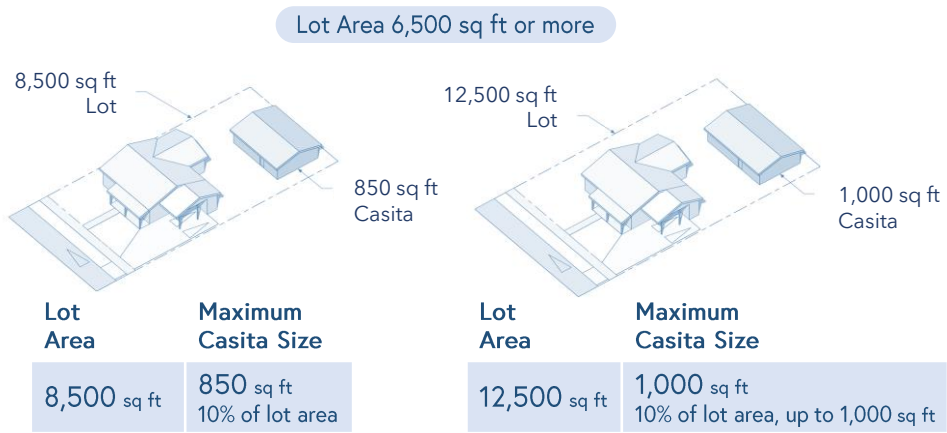
Step 2: Design your casita.

Size - the square footage of a casita is based on two guidelines: **Lot Area** and **Lot Coverage**

Lot Area For lots **6,499 square feet or less** in size, a casita is limited to 650 square feet of gross floor area.

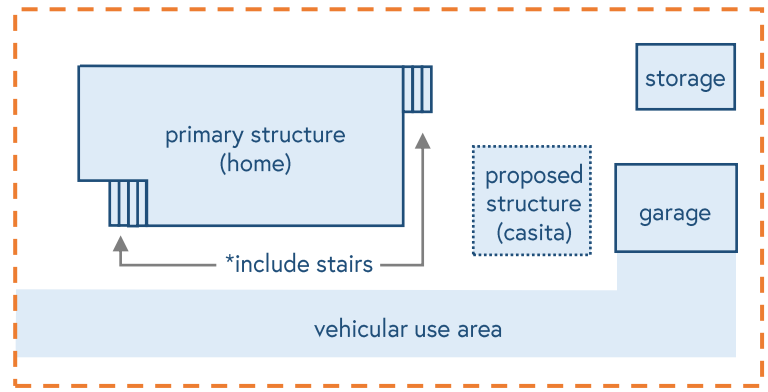


For lots **larger than 6,500 square feet**, a casita is limited to 10% of the lot size, not to exceed 1,000 square feet of gross floor area.



* Depending on your zone or lot size, you may be eligible to build a home of a different size. Contact zone1.desk@tucsonaz.gov for more information.

Lot Coverage



Lot Coverage is the area of the lot covered by improvements, including:

- Existing buildings (primary structure, garage, etc.)
- Vehicular use areas (either improved or unimproved)
- Storage areas
- Proposed structure (casita)

In most cases, lot coverage is limited to 70% - 80% of your lot, depending on your zone.

Check the maximum permitted lot coverage in your zone: [UDC 6.3 Dimensional Standards](#)

Existing Buildings (include primary structure, garage, etc)	<input type="text"/>	sq ft
Vehicular Use Areas	<input type="text"/>	sq ft
Storage Areas	<input type="text"/>	sq ft
Proposed Structure	<input type="text"/>	sq ft
What is your total lot coverage?	<input type="text"/>	sq ft

What zone is your property in?

Maximum permitted lot coverage: %

What size is your lot? sq ft

Percent Lot Coverage = %

Step 2: Design your casita. *continued*

Height - a casita can be 12' tall, or the same height of the primary structure, whichever is greater

Primary Structure	Maximum Casita Height
1 story	12 ft
2 story	Same as primary structure

*For more details on measuring the height of your primary structure, see [UDC 6.4.4](#)

Location & Setbacks - the location of a casita is based on two sets of guidelines

Location

A freestanding casita may be placed in the rear or side yards but not the front yard.

For more details, see [UDC 6.6.3](#)

Setbacks

A casita is subject to the setback requirements of the property's base zone.

Setbacks for rear and side yards are the distance between the property and the exterior wall of the structure and are determined by the zone of the subject property and the adjacent property.

To determine minimum setback requirements, see [UDC 6.3](#)

What flexibility is allowed for setbacks?

DDO - Design Development Option
A DDO is a separate application to allow minor changes to the standard requirements that would allow smaller minimum setback requirements. See [UDC 3.11.1](#) for more details.

What zone is your property in?	Rear Neighbor Zone:	Side 1 Neighbor Zone:	Side 2 Neighbor Zone:
	Rear Setback:	Side 1 Setback:	Side 2 Setback:
	ft	ft	ft

To reference a summary of dimensional standards, see www.tucsonaz.gov/files/pdsd/pdfs/Dimensional_Standards_Summary_July_2020.pdf

Parking - one space is required for a casita



- The minimum size for a parking space is 8.5' x 18'
- On-street parking may be used if available.
- The parking space may be waived if within 1/4 mile of a transit stop or a bicycle boulevard.

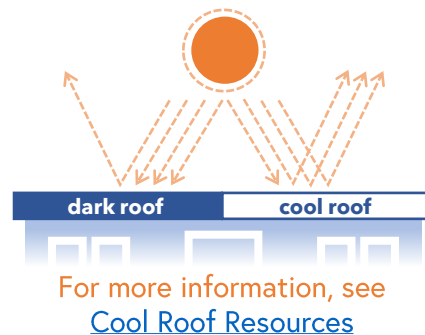
To determine the required amount of vehicle parking for your entire property, see [UDC Table 7.4.4-1](#)

Remember - include onsite parking dimensions in your vehicular use area lot coverage calculations

Cool Roof - required for a newly constructed casita

A cool roof is designed to reflect more sunlight than a conventional roof, absorbing less solar energy. This lowers the temperature of the building and can save energy and money in buildings by reducing heat flow from the roof into the occupied space.

The roof should have a Solar Reflectance Index (SRI) greater than 60 or use another cool roof technology according to the [ICC Green Construction Code](#)



Update Development Standards - if applicable

If the new casita is the third dwelling unit on the property, commercial development standards will apply to the entire lot.

Any residential development consisting of three or more dwelling units on a single lot is considered multifamily [UDC 11.3.7](#)

This may affect standards for parking, pedestrian facilities, and landscaping.

For more information about commercial development standards see [UDC Article 7](#)

Step 3: Apply for a permit.

Apply [online](#)

- Submit the following:
- Residential plot plan
 - Floor plan
 - Construction document

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

See a list of [permit requirements](#)

More information on permit and impact fees

[Permit Fees](#) [Planning & Permit Fees](#)

[Impact Fees](#) [Information Calculator](#)

For additional questions, contact

[Permit Process](#) pdsdinquries@tucsonaz.gov

[Zoning Requirements](#) zone1.desk@tucsonaz.gov

Additional Resources

What are construction and rental restrictions?

- Construction must be performed by licensed contractor or homeowner. See AZ State Law [A.R.S. § 32-1121.A.5](#)
- Group dwelling restrictions prohibit 5 or more unrelated individuals from residing in one home. In R-1 zones, 5+ unrelated individuals cannot live on the same lot.

How will utilities be connected?

Every site is different. Consider existing utility lines and design options for connecting to them. Work with utility companies to obtain necessary approvals for any utility work or new connections.

[Tucson Electric Power](#)

[Tucson Water](#)

Pre-Fabricated Options

Need some design ideas?

Want to save some time?

There are pre-built casitas available that may be compatible with the City code and your property.

Amnesty Program

Do you already have a casita that you want to bring up to code?

PDS is developing an amnesty program - a process to avoid penalty for unpermitted casitas. More information will be available soon.

Mi Casita Program

Are you interested in learning more about casitas in Tucson?

Visit [Pima County Community Land Trust](#) for more information