

CITY OF PINOLE

Community Development Department

Planning • Building • Code Enforcement • Affordable Housing • Economic Development

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PINOLE ADU/JADU AMNESTY PROGRAM — QUICK GUIDE

Legalizing Existing, Unpermitted ADUs and JADUs Built Before January 1, 2020

The City of Pinole offers an Amnesty Program to help property owners legalize existing ADUs or JADUs that were built or converted without permits before January 1, 2020. This process allows the City to review the unit under the building codes that applied at the time it was constructed — while still ensuring essential life-safety requirements are met.

AM I ELIGIBLE?

Your ADU/JADU may qualify if:

Construction Date

- The unit was built or converted **before January 1, 2020**.
- You can provide documentation showing when the work happened.

Location

- The property is in a zoning district where ADUs/JADUs are allowed.
- These include most residential and mixed-use zones in Pinole.



Number of Units

- Legalizing this unit will not exceed the number of ADUs/JADUs allowed on your lot.
- If you are unsure, contact the Planning Division.

For JADUs

- JADUs are only allowed on lots with an existing or proposed single-family home.
- If the JADU shares a bathroom with the house, the owner must live in the home or the JADU.

WHAT DOCUMENTS DO I NEED?

Provide any records showing when the ADU/JADU was built. You do **not** need all items — just what you have.

Strong (“Primary”) Documentation

- Assessor records
- Rental agreements or receipts
- Contractor invoices or proposals
- Utility bills
- Escrow documents
- Letters from licensed professionals
- City records (Building, Planning, Code Enforcement)
- Real estate disclosure forms

Helpful (“Secondary”) Documentation

- Insurance records
- Notarized letters from owners or tenants
- Dated photographs
- Other documents showing the approximate construction date

WHAT PLANS DO I NEED TO SUBMIT?

A basic **plan set** that shows:

- **Site plan** (where the ADU/JADU sits on the lot)
- **Floor plan** (layout of rooms)
- **Exterior elevations** (overall appearance)

Additional details may be requested depending on the unit.



MINIMUM SAFETY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify, the unit must meet essential life-safety standards.

These items will be confirmed by inspection. Examples include:

- The unit is structurally sound (no major sagging, leaning, or unsafe conditions)
- Safe electrical wiring; no exposed wiring
- Working smoke alarms (in bedrooms and hallways)
- Working carbon monoxide alarms (if gas is present)
- Adequate exit routes — including proper egress window(s) in sleeping rooms
- Plumbing fixtures in safe, sanitary condition
- A functioning heating system that can maintain **68°F**
- Water heater safety: proper venting, seismic straps, relief valve, etc.

If issues are found, most can be corrected during the 5-year remediation period provided by the program. For more details, please see the ADU/JADU Amnesty Program – Self-Assessment Checklist.

WHERE TO GET HELP

Email: **PlanningQuestions@pinole.gov** or **BuildingQuestions@pinole.gov**

Phone: **(510) 724-8912**

Website: **www.pinole.gov**

We're here to help you navigate the process.



HOW DO I APPLY?

Step 1 — Determine Eligibility

- Verify Construction Date: The unpermitted ADU/JADU must have been constructed before January 1, 2020.
- Confirm Use and Safety Standards: If an ADU, the unit must currently function as a dwelling (e.g., includes a kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping area) and must not pose a risk to public health or safety as defined by Health and Safety Code §17920.3.
- JADUs may share a restroom with the primary unit, however, at least an efficiency kitchen must be provided.

Step 2 — Conduct Self-Assessment

- Complete the Self-Assessment Checklist to evaluate eligibility and identify potential health and safety concerns. The checklist helps owners determine whether the unit meets program criteria before submitting an application to the City.

Step 3 — Optional Third-Party Inspection

- Property owners may hire a licensed contractor or inspector to perform a confidential, third-party inspection of the unit. The report can help address potential issues before submitting an application.

Step 4 — Request a Free Consultation

- Schedule a confidential meeting with City staff in the Planning Division to review eligibility, gather program information, and receive guidance on the application process.

Step 5 — Gather Documents and Prepare a Plan Set/Application Materials

Collect any evidence of when the unit was built and prepare required submittal documents; a designer, architect, or draftsman can be retained to help if needed.

Step 6 — Submit an Application

Apply online: www.pinole.gov/planning_permit_information

Step 7 — City Review

Staff verifies eligibility, reviews plans, and identifies any needed safety corrections.

Step 8 — Inspection

A City inspector will visit the property.

Step 9 — Correct Safety Items (if needed)

Some corrections must be made immediately; others may qualify for a 5-year remediation window. The **Self-Assessment Checklist** will guide which corrections need to be made and when.

Step 10 — Final Approval

Once all required items are addressed, the City issues a Certificate of Occupancy or Certificate of Compliance.