


ADU Work Group Session 5

# Helping Homeowners Build ADUs



October 15, 2025

  ASSOCIATION OF BAY AREA GOVERNMENTS  
METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

 Technical Assistance  
for Local Planning  
HOUSING

 COMMUNITY  
PLANNING  
COLLABORATIVE

# Introductions

- Sam Dolgoff, Project Manager
- Abbie Tuning, Associate
- Bowen Close, Creative Director

# Agenda

- Bridging Policy & Action
- Public Information
- Homeowner Support
- Getting the Word Out
- Resources for Staff & Applicants

# Work Group Overview



ADU Landscape 101: Where are we now?

Zoning, Streamlining, Preapproving: Steps to Promote ADUs

Hot Topics: Amnesty & Condoization

Affordable ADUs: Fee Waivers, Loan Programs, Incentives & Financing

Helping Homeowners Build ADUs: Putting It All Together

# Past Session Additional Guidance

ADU Affordability – *Published!*

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- Implementation Guide

Amnesty for Unpermitted ADUs

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- Implementation Guide
- Template Checklist

ADU Condos

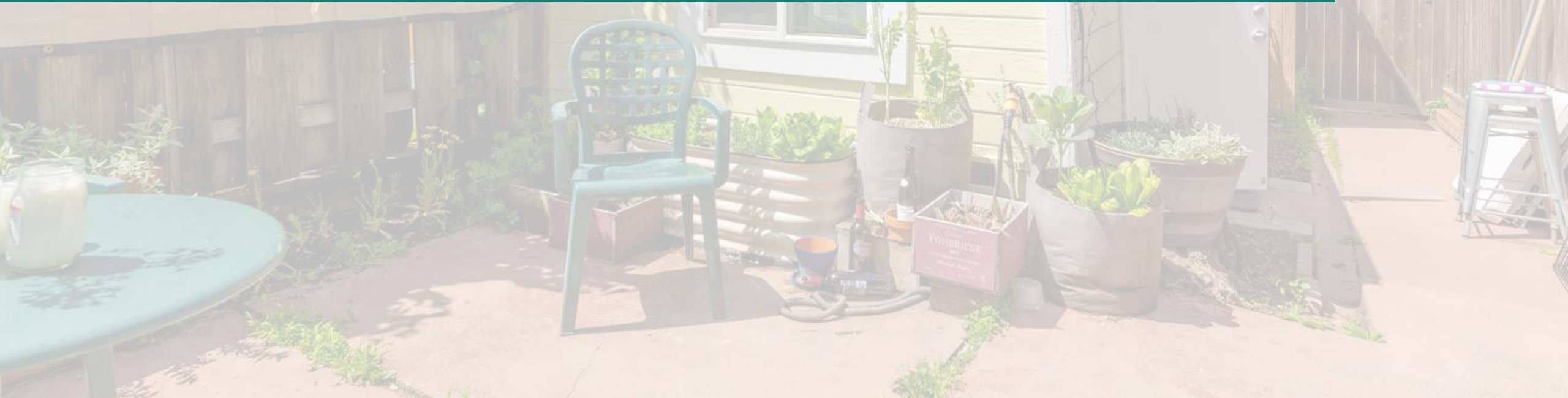
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- Implementation Guide
- Ordinance Language

Putting It All Together: Policy, Programs,  
Process, Public Info

- Implementation Guide
- Templates, Language, Graphics

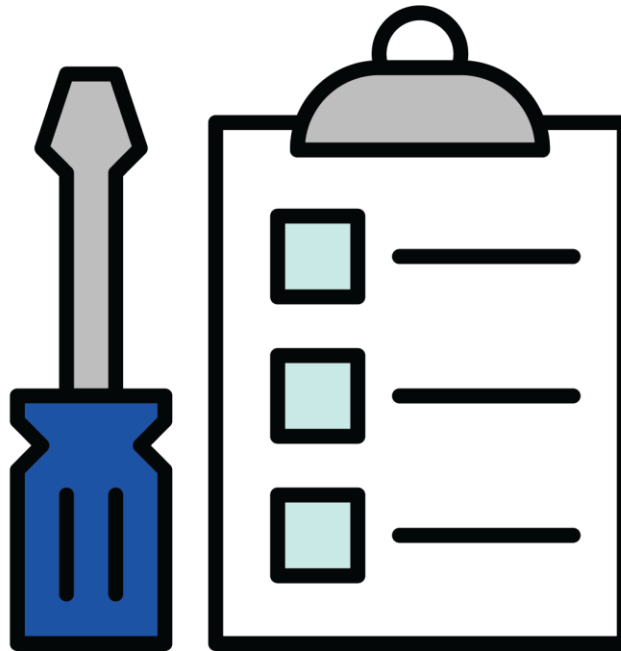
# Bridging Policy & Action

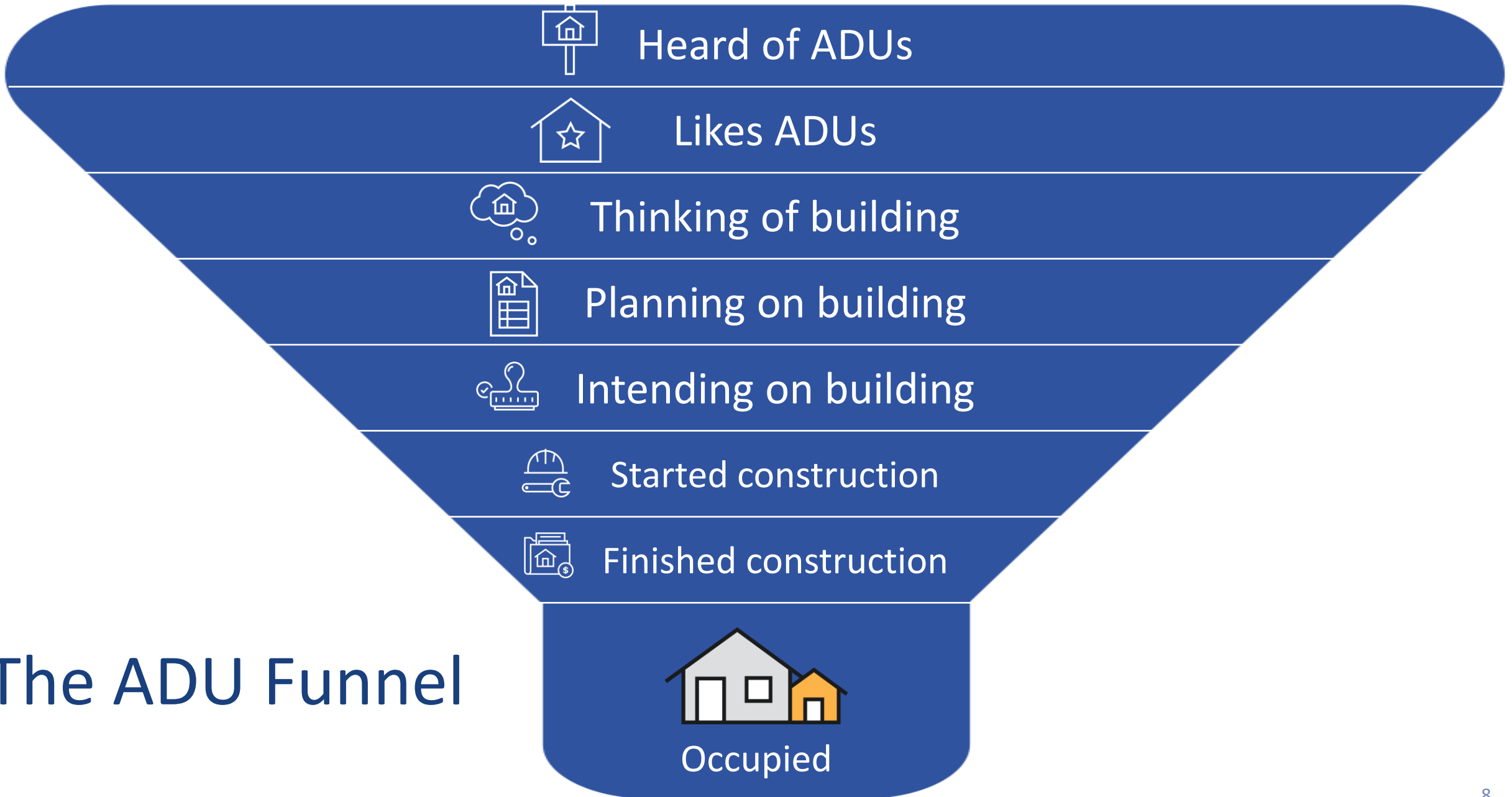


# Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) In A Nutshell

- ADUs are complicated for being small homes

\*Good policy & process helps improve outcomes





# The ADU Funnel

# Getting ADUs Built: Key Goals



## Key Policy Goals

Reduce Complexity - Simple rules & fewer restrictions

Support Local Goals - Programs & incentives



## Key Process Goal

Make it Fast & Easy - Straightforward process, faster review



## Key Public Info Goal

Provide Guidance - Clear information for applicants

# Putting It All Together

## Policies



- Assess & Audit
- Set Goals
- Update & Adopt

## Programs



- Identify Needs
- Develop & Plan
- Implement

## Process



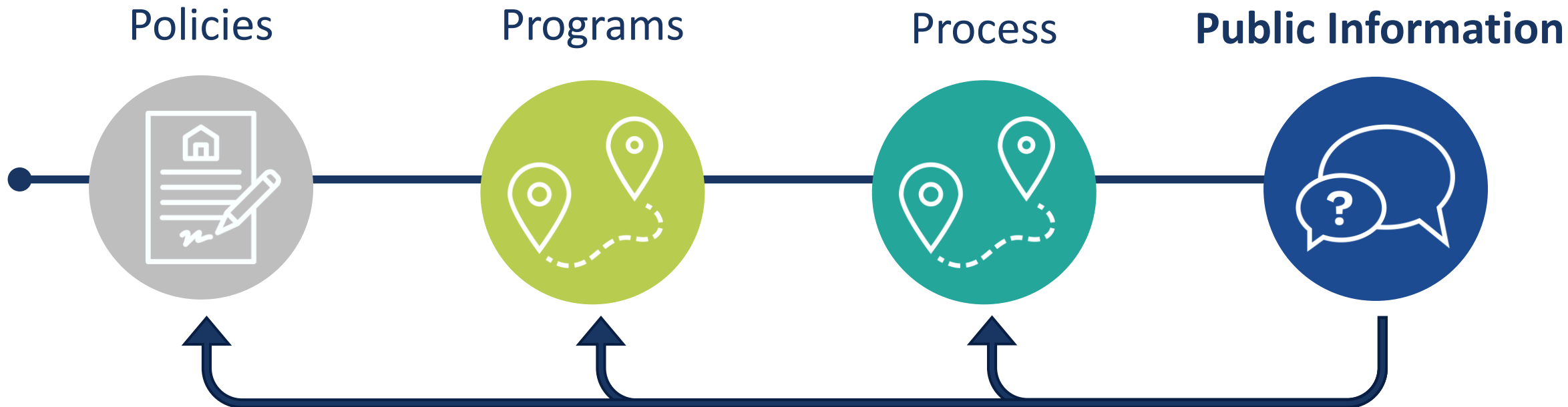
- Audit & Map Out
- Align Departments
- Document & Integrate

## Public Information



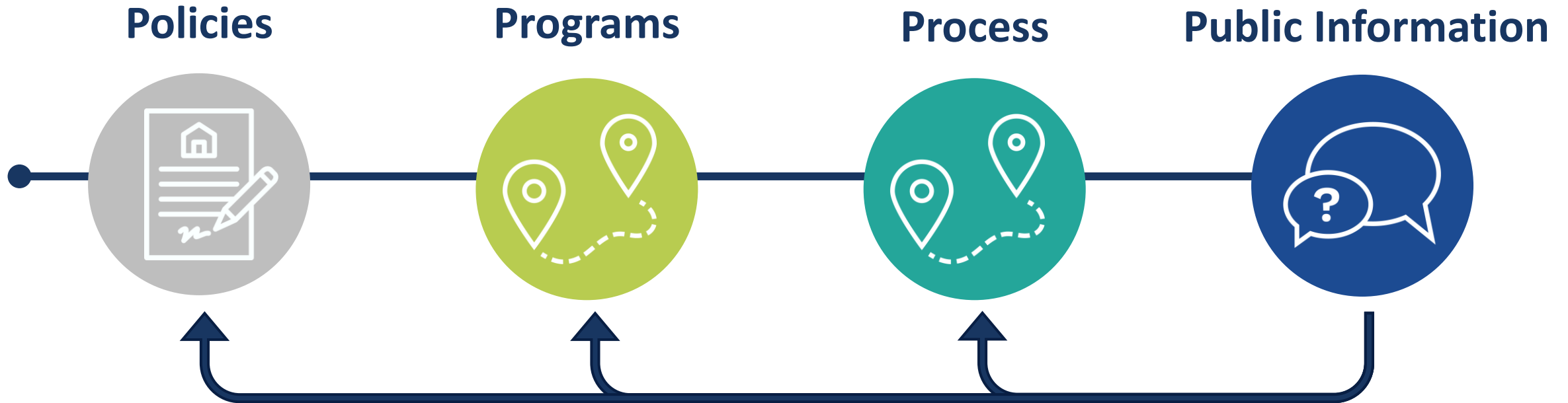
- Develop Materials
- Educate Staff
- Get the Word Out

# Putting It All Together: Public Information



- **Develop Materials**
- **Educate Staff**
- **Get the Word Out**

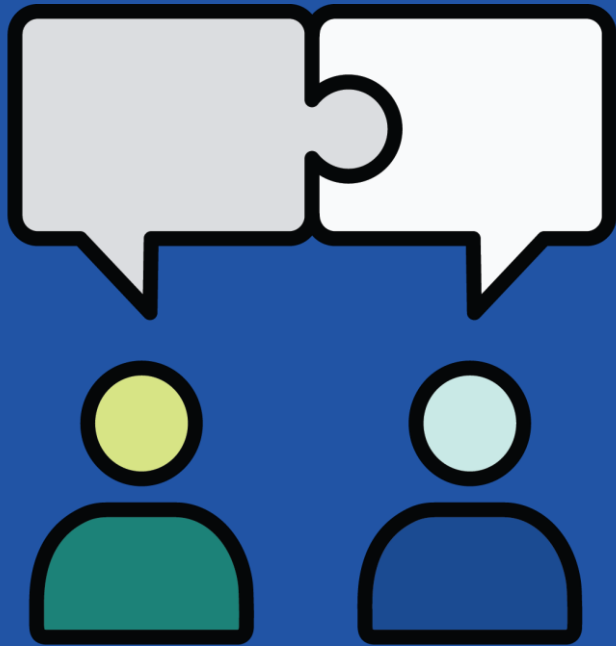
# Putting It All Together: Plan for Outreach



**Plan for Outreach from beginning**

- Develop Materials
- Educate Staff
- Get the Word Out

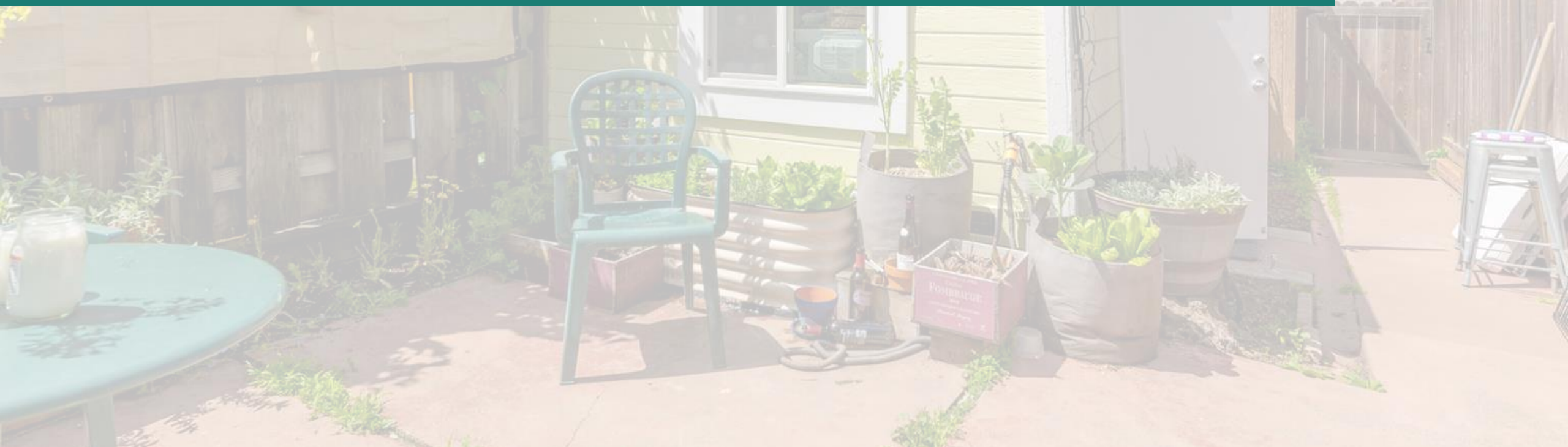
# ADU Champions Drive Meaningful Change



## Successful improvements are led by ADU champions

- Remind decision makers how this will achieve housing element commitments
- Build partnerships and align goals across departments
- Provide ongoing updates on successes and keep improving

# Public Information

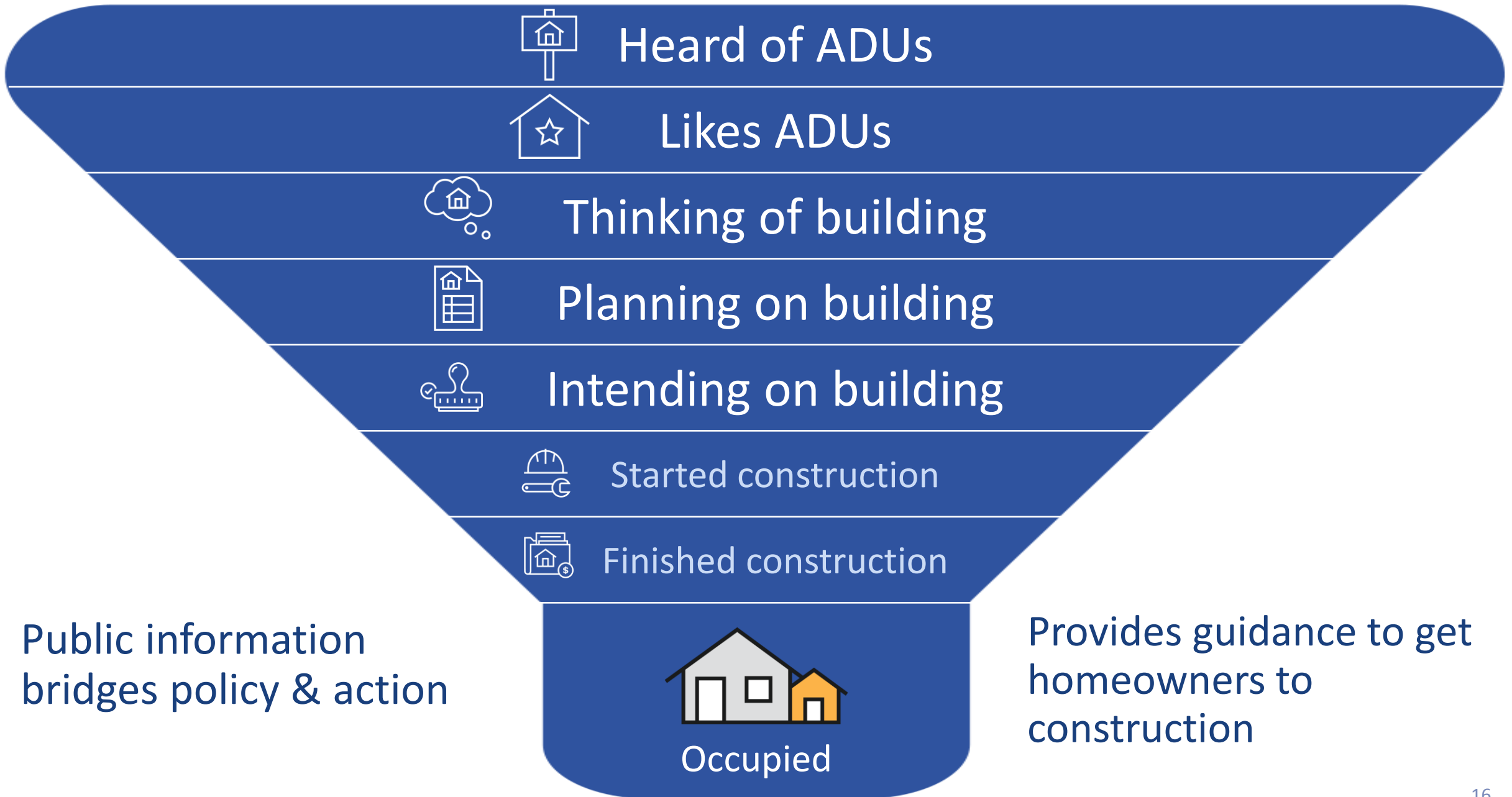


# Why Prioritize Public Information?

- Applicants are not developers, they are friends, neighbors, parents
- Homeowners drive the process
  - They don't know where to start or what to do
  - If they get confused or frustrated, they may give up

\*Good public information is what helps applicants understand the rules & process





Public information  
bridges policy & action

Provides guidance to get  
homeowners to  
construction

# ADU Webpages



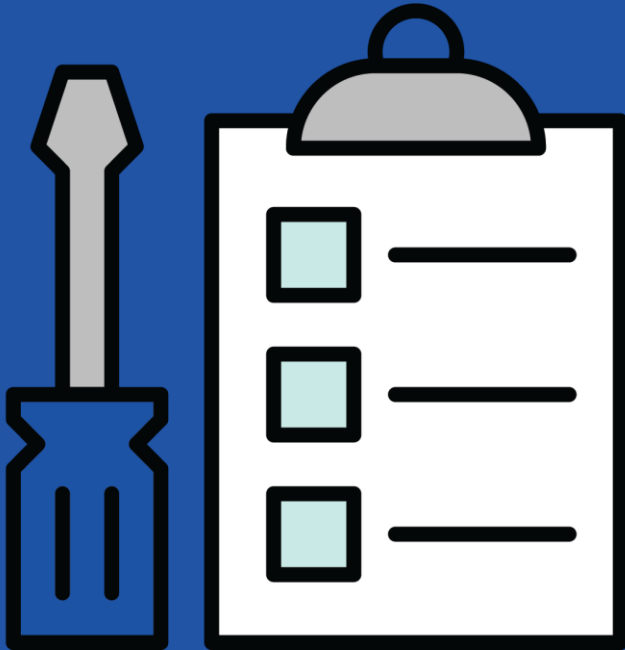
## Create a clear & easy-to-understand ADU webpage

- Use simple, friendly language & graphics
- Keep information high-level with links to more detailed information
- Save more detailed information for other resources (rules & process handouts)
- Explain how to get more information & ask questions
- Make ongoing updates to keep information current

### Resources:

- Template Public Info Language, Graphics & Icons, Glossary & FAQs

# Handouts & Checklists



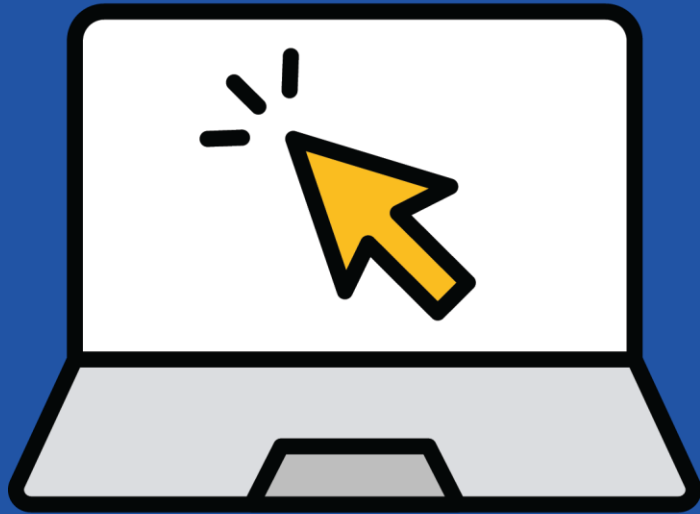
Provide resources that explain ADU rules & process

- Create handouts with what applicants need to know
- Make easy-to-understand homeowner & builder-facing checklists & informational materials
- Include as links on the ADU webpage
- Offer print copies at the counter

## Resources:

- Template ADU Mini Guide for Homeowners, Glossary & FAQs

# Online Planning Tools



## Offer digital tools to help homeowners understand requirements & gather information

- Create checklists to help homeowners see if they are eligible & meet local requirements
- Consider GIS lookup tools or cost calculators to help people understand rules & costs
- Provide links to example floorplans or designs for inspiration or pre-approved plans if available

# Share Local ADU Stories



## Spotlight local resident stories that inspire action

- Reach out to residents that have built ADUs to ask for quotes about their ADU story
- Tell local stories that focus on family & community benefits using interviews, photoshoots or videos

Check out: Local stories from [Alameda](#), [Napa-Sonoma](#), [San Mateo](#), [Santa Clara](#)

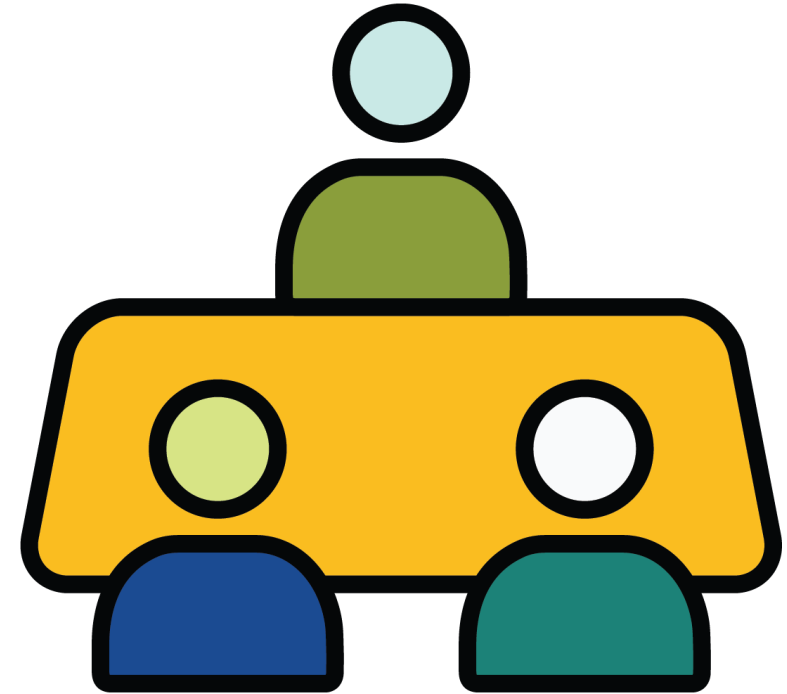


# Homeowner Support



# Homeowners Need Support

- Many homeowners need handholding
- Staff can answer general questions about rules & requirements
- Limited resources & other factors make this more difficult



 Heard of ADUs

 Likes ADUs

 Thinking of building

 Planning on building

 Intending on building

 Started construction

 Finished construction



Occupied

Support helps homeowners take action

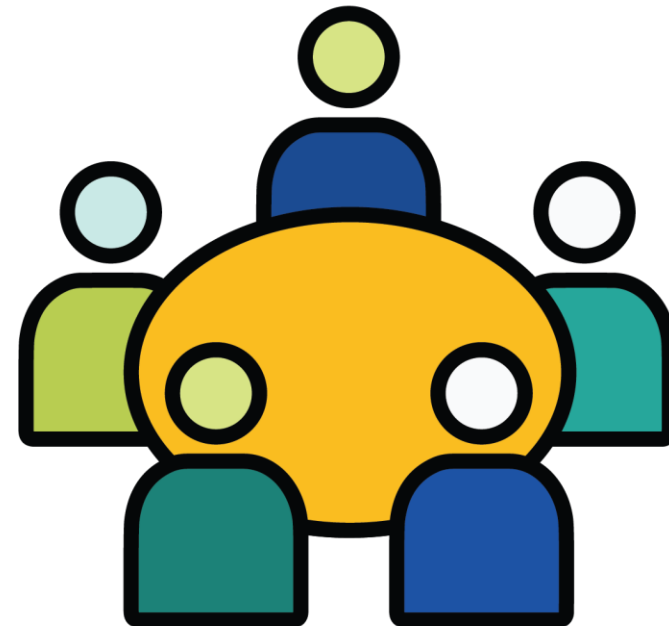
Helps get homeowners to/through construction

# Outside Support for Homeowners

- Take the burden off staff
  - Answer general questions about rules, requirements, process
- Support throughout the process
  - Getting started
  - Feasibility & financing
  - Finding a designer/contractor
  - Permit process
  - Project management support
- Build relationships & trust
  - A neutral third party
  - Can make recommendations staff can't

## Alternate Support Models

- Collaboration through ADU Resource Centers
- Partnership with local organizations
- Contracting with service providers



# Collaboration: ADU Center (Napa, Sonoma, Marin)

## Funded by jurisdiction contributions

- Homeowner support services
  - Education & Events
    - Homeowner webinars
  - Feasibility consults
    - 1-hour virtual meeting with an ADU expert
    - Customized feasibility reports
  - ADU expert office hours
    - Bring questions or listen in



THE BEST FIRST STEP FOR YOUR ADU PROJECT

## **Customized feasibility consults for your property**

*Note: Consults are available in member communities – see our [Contact page](#) for details.*

**SIGN UP TODAY**

[Source: Napa Sonoma ADU Center](#)

# Collaboration: San Mateo County ADU Resource Center

## Funded by jurisdiction contributions

- Homeowner support services
  - Education & Events
    - ADU Fair & Tours
    - Homeowner webinars
  - Feasibility consults
    - 1-hour virtual consult with an ADU specialist
  - ADU expert help line
    - 20-minute calls to troubleshoot or ask questions
- Affordable ADU program
  - Manage incentive program to support affordable ADU development

**UPCOMING WEBINAR: JULY 23 AT  
10AM**

## **SOURCING A GENERAL CONTRACTOR FOR YOUR ADU**

- When and how to engage a contractor
- What questions to ask before you hire
- How to compare multiple bids apples-to-apples
- Red flags to look out for
- What you can expect when working with a GC

**REGISTER**

[Source: San Mateo County ADU Resource Center](#)

# Partnership Model: EPACANDO Project Assistance

- Homeowner support services:
  - Feasibility
  - Financing
  - Plans & Permits
  - Construction
  - Lease up or move in
- ADU loan program in partnership with City of East Palo Alto

Celebration! Innovative ADU Project #1 financed, built, rented

Aug 8, 2022 | All, Ownership Homes



[Source: EPA CAN DO](#)

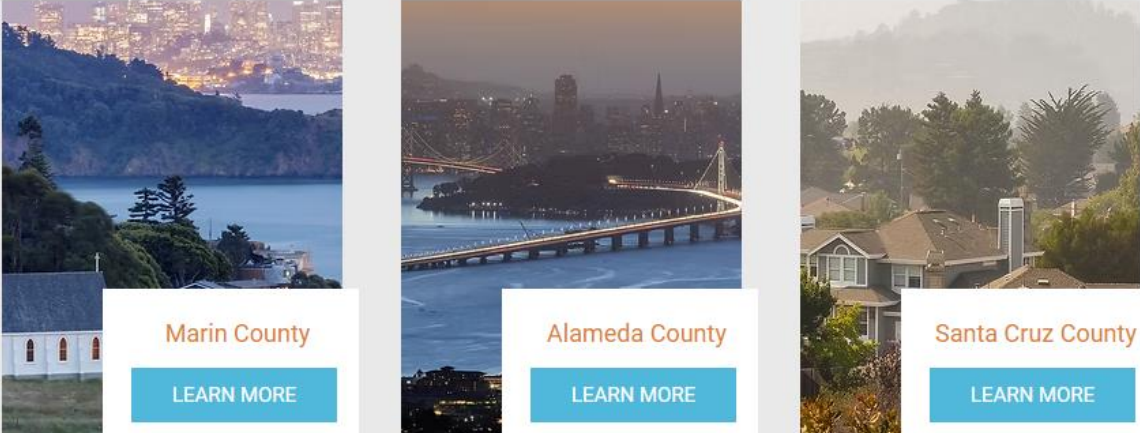
# Contractor Model: Hello ADU Project Assistance

- Homeowner support services:
  - Feasibility & financing
  - Design & planning
  - Permitting
  - Construction management
  - ADU help line
- Provides services to:
  - South San Francisco
  - Unincorporated Marin
  - Alameda County
  - San Mateo County
  - Santa Cruz County

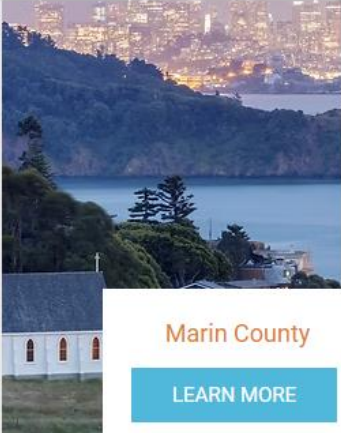
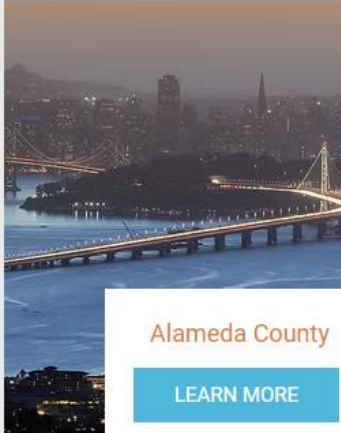
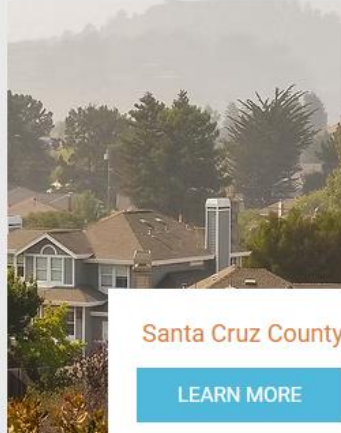
Counties around the Bay Area are Offering

## ADU Project Support

HelloADU is proud to partner with the following cities and counties to provide Professional Project Management Support for homeowners who want to build an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU). Space is limited so apply now.

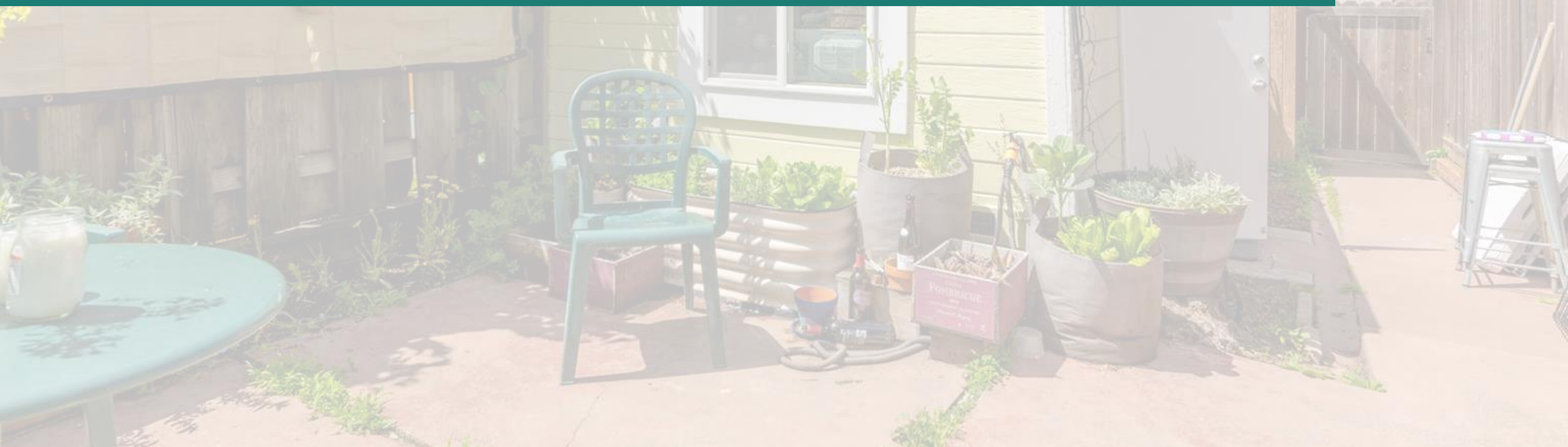


The image shows three promotional cards for ADU Project Support. Each card features a scenic photograph of a location in the Bay Area. The first card shows a view of a city at night with lights reflecting on the water, with a white church in the foreground. The second card shows a view of a city at night with a bridge over the water. The third card shows a view of a residential neighborhood with houses and trees. Each card has a white box at the bottom with the county name and a 'LEARN MORE' button.

 <p>Marin County</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	 <p>Alameda County</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>	 <p>Santa Cruz County</p> <p>LEARN MORE</p>
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[Source: Hello ADU](#)

# Getting the Word Out!



# Outreach Planning is Essential

- Staff work hard to develop and implement a lot of great work
- How to get the word out can be overlooked
- Important to save time and resources for outreach

\*An Outreach Plan can ensure residents likely to build get the inspiration and information needed to start



# Plan Outreach Efforts & Rollout



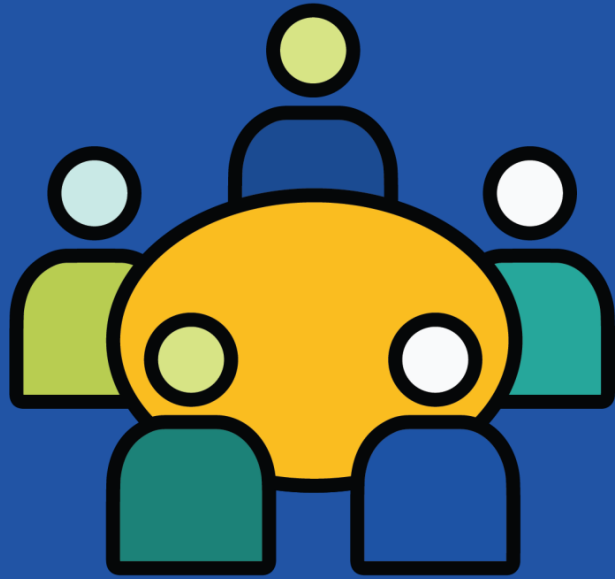
## Design an outreach plan at beginning of project

- Identify internal resources to help get the word out (PIO, Departments, Elected Officials)
- Work across departments on outreach
- Identify and plan for materials needed
- Consider time, resources, and assign a point person
- Identify existing opportunities for outreach (Events or tabling to join)
- Think creatively about outreach venues & partners

Resources: Template Social Media Announcements,  
PowerPoint Template, Graphics & Icons

# Develop Community Partnerships

Partner with local organizations to improve program reach



- Identify and reach out to nonprofits, realtor and construction groups, and/or community organizations
- Work with them to distribute information on ADUs, co-host events & offer homeowner assistance
- Develop outreach for priority communities
- Provide in-language resources to expand reach
- Meet people where they're at

# Plan for Ongoing Outreach

## Continue to engage community members

- Build into plan at a quarterly or bi-annual cadence
- Host information tables at city & community events
- Hold ADU events
  - Open House, ADU Tour, Vendor Fair
- Partner with PIO and/or other departments and electeds to schedule regular newsletter & social media updates
- Develop partnerships for ongoing, periodic public outreach



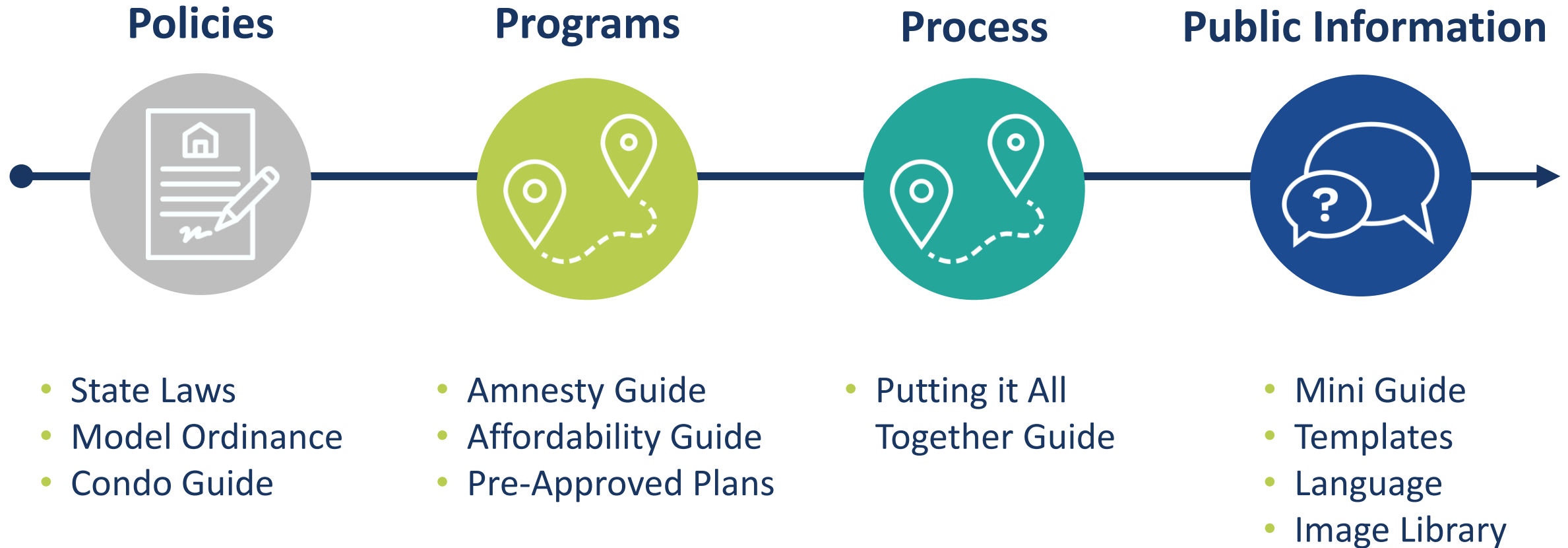
# Reassess & Keep Improving





# Resources for Staff & Applicants

# Resources to Support Staff & Applicants



# Public Information Templates



ADU Mini-Guide for Homeowners



Glossary & FAQs Handout



Library of Images,  
Graphics, Icons

[Municipal/County Code Citation]

## Building an Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) or Junior ADU (JADU) in [Jx Name]

Invest in your family and community and build an ADU  
From space for your loved ones to building your retirement through renting, an ADU will grow with you and your family over time.

- Housing Family like adult children, parents or loved ones with special needs.
- A Home as You Age for caregivers or aging adults who want to downsize.
- Property value and future sales price increase with an ADU.
- Extra Hands on your property can be helpful for upkeep, daily tasks and more.
- Rental income for retirement, savings or a rainy day.
- Housing community from workers to young families looking for a local home.

### What is an Accessory Dwelling Unit?

Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) come in many shapes and sizes but are always a self-contained home that is legally part of the same property.

Both ADUs and JADUs must have their own entryway and be at least 150 square feet in size. Both must be rented for 30 days or more—no short-term rentals are allowed.

ADUs can be attached or detached and may be brand-new construction or converted from existing buildings or structures. ADUs can be up to [1,200] square feet and must have their own bathroom and a full kitchen. Shared walls and floors must be rated for one-hour fire resistance.

Junior ADUs (JADUs) are conversions no more than 500 square feet, located within an existing home (including an attached garage). JADUs can share a bathroom with the main home and need at least a sink, a counter, and smaller appliances. The owner must live in the main home or the JADU.

Your Logo Here

[Jurisdiction Name]  
[Division/Department Name] | [Address]  
Phone: [555-555-5555] | Fax: [555-555-5555]  
E-mail: [address] | [alternate address] | Website: [web address]

# Public Information Templates, cont'd



## Template ADU Language

- General Information for Webpages
- Pre-approved Plans Information
- Amnesty for Unpermitted Units



## Socia Media Announcements



## Slide Deck for Public Meetings



# State ADU Laws



## Summary & Compliance Checklist



## Model Ordinance

- Includes ADU Condos Language

Association of Bay Area Governments  
Technical Assistance for Local Planning  
HOUSING

**DISCLAIMER:** This document is intended solely as an overview of California Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) laws. It is not legal advice regarding any jurisdiction's specific policies or any proposed project. Local staff should consult with their city attorney or county counsel regarding this document.

### State Laws Summary for Accessory Dwelling Units & Junior Accessory Dwelling Units

#### Background & Definitions

Since January 1, 2020, the state has enacted several Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU) and Junior Accessory Dwelling Unit (JADU) laws to ease requirements and encourage the development of new housing units. These laws define what is considered an ADU and a JADU, set objective standards and set requirements for ministerial review for ADU and JADU projects. This summary includes information about the state law requirements, how to comply, and ways jurisdictions may go above and beyond state law to support ADU and JADU development. In 2024, the ADU and JADU statutes were renumbered as Government Code Sections 66310-66342.

**Note:** This document applies to ADUs that are required to be permitted ministerially under state law. However, a jurisdiction could allow for ADUs that do not meet the requirements under state law and adopt a separate discretionary permitting process for those ADUs. A discretionary process would have to be included in the ADU Ordinance.

**Table 1: Accessory Dwelling Unit Definitions**

Development Type	Definition
Accessory Dwelling Unit (ADU)	ADU means a residential dwelling unit providing complete independent living facilities for one or more persons containing permanent provisions for living, sleeping, eating, cooking, and sanitation (tub/shower, sink, and a toilet), located on the same parcel as a single-family or multi-family dwelling. An ADU also includes an efficiency unit, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 17958.1 and a manufactured home, as defined in Health and Safety Code Section 18007.

7/1/2025

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# Pre-Approved ADU Plans



Staff Overview & Compliance Checklist



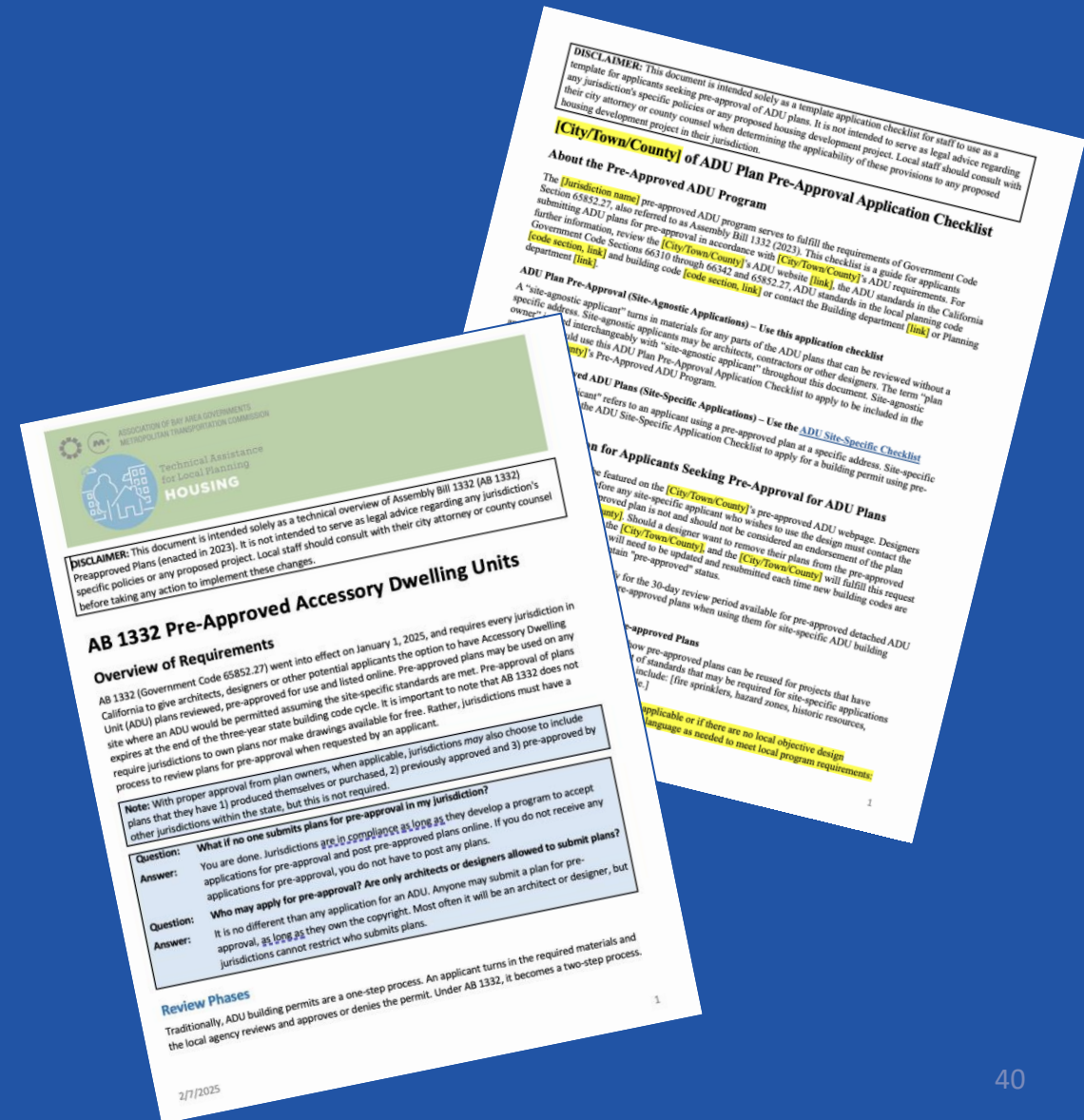
Template Informational Slide Deck



Template Staff Report Language



Info Session Recordings



# Policy, Program, Process, Public Info Memos

ADU Affordability – *Published!*

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- Implementation Guide

Amnesty for Unpermitted ADUs

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- Implementation Guide
- Template Checklist

ADU Condoization

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- Implementation Guide
- Ordinance Language

Putting It All Together: Policy, Programs,  
Process, Public Info

- Implementation Guide
- Templates, Language, Graphics



# Questions, Ideas or Needs?

# ABAG Regional Housing Technical Assistance Resources

Access resources on the ABAG Regional Housing Technical Assistance website:

- [Public Information Templates & Resources](#)
- [Guidance, Memos & Laws Resources](#)

Questions?

- Email [Dolgoff@planningcollaborative.com](mailto:Dolgoff@planningcollaborative.com)