



222 W. Washington Avenue, Suite 600 | Madison, WI 53701
608-286-6300 | aarp.org/wi | wistate@aarp.org
twitter: @aarpwi | [facebook.com/AARP Wisconsin](https://facebook.com/AARPWisconsin)

29 January 2024

AARP WISCONSIN COMMENTS ON ADU ORDINANCE

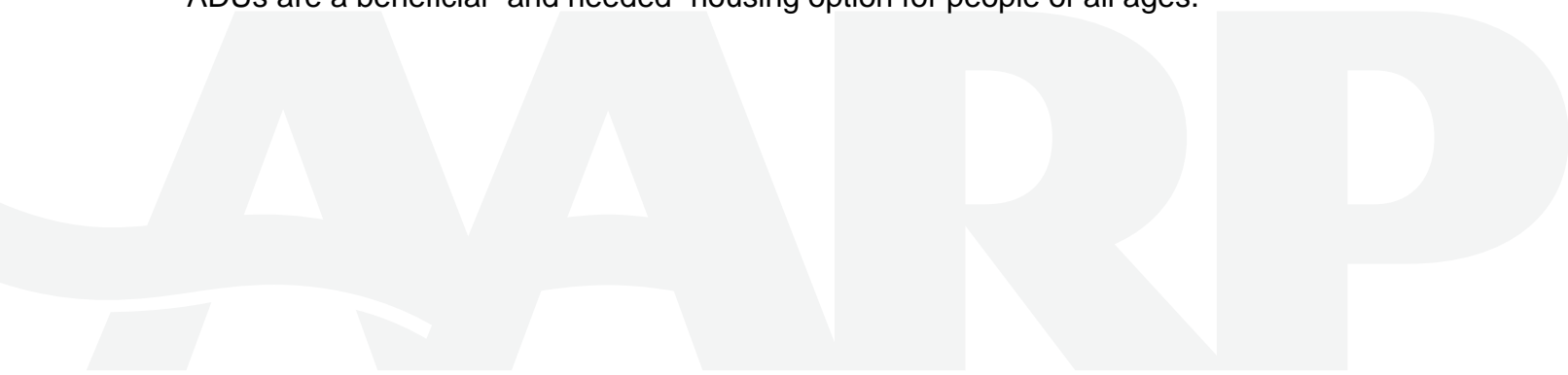
AARP supports communities allowing the construction of Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) as part of a wholistic approach to creating a community livable for all ages and all abilities. We recognize that the vast majority of people 50-plus face barriers in accessing sufficient housing, transportation, and public space options in their communities and notwithstanding these challenges, we firmly believe that everyone deserves to age in a home and community of their choosing.

We view ADUs as a solution to keep families together. For those in need of caregiving assistance they provide an economic alternative to the high cost of assisted living centers. Research shows that older adults enjoy a better quality of life when they can remain in close proximity to the social connections developed over the course of their lifetime. The purchasing power of La Crosse residents 50 and older generates tax revenue, creates jobs, and creates stability in other important areas like healthcare, housing, and transportation. These are also active volunteers within the community and local leaders. All compelling reasons to provide them options to remain in the city.

La Crosse resident Eileen K. contacted me after seeing information about ADUs put out by our office and shared the following, "I had wanted a mother-in-law ADU in my son's backyard but was not allowed to build because city staff could not reach a consensus about building them. I am familiar with ADUs... and I loved the concept and the design."

An ADU can provide older adults a way to downsize on their own property while a tenant or family member resides in the larger house thus maintaining the social connection so vital to enjoying a happy life. Permitting the construction of ADUs more easily allows a homeowner to exercise their property rights to gain additional income. It should be noted that ADUs help to improve housing affordability and diversify a community's housing stock without changing the physical character of the neighborhood. They can assist in providing appropriate housing to essential workers in La Crosse such as teachers, nurses, or first responders, who would like to live in the community that they serve.

ADUs are a beneficial- and needed- housing option for people of all ages.



AARP WI is honored to have been consulted by city staff in the original drafting of this ordinance. Comments provided to the Neighborhood Revitalization Commission in 2023 resulted in changes to the original draft that more closely aligns La Crosse's proposed ordinance with best practices we've encountered from around the country.

We recognize that passing of the ordinance will not result in a flurry of new ADU construction- plan review takes time, and let's be honest, ADUs are not inexpensive to build. But passing of the ordinance does provide options for homeowners that did not exist before and is a step in the right direction to creating an age-friendly La Crosse because we know that well-designed, age-friendly communities foster economic growth and make for happier, healthier residents of all ages.