



Executive Office of
Housing & Livable Communities

ADU Design Challenge Webinar #1

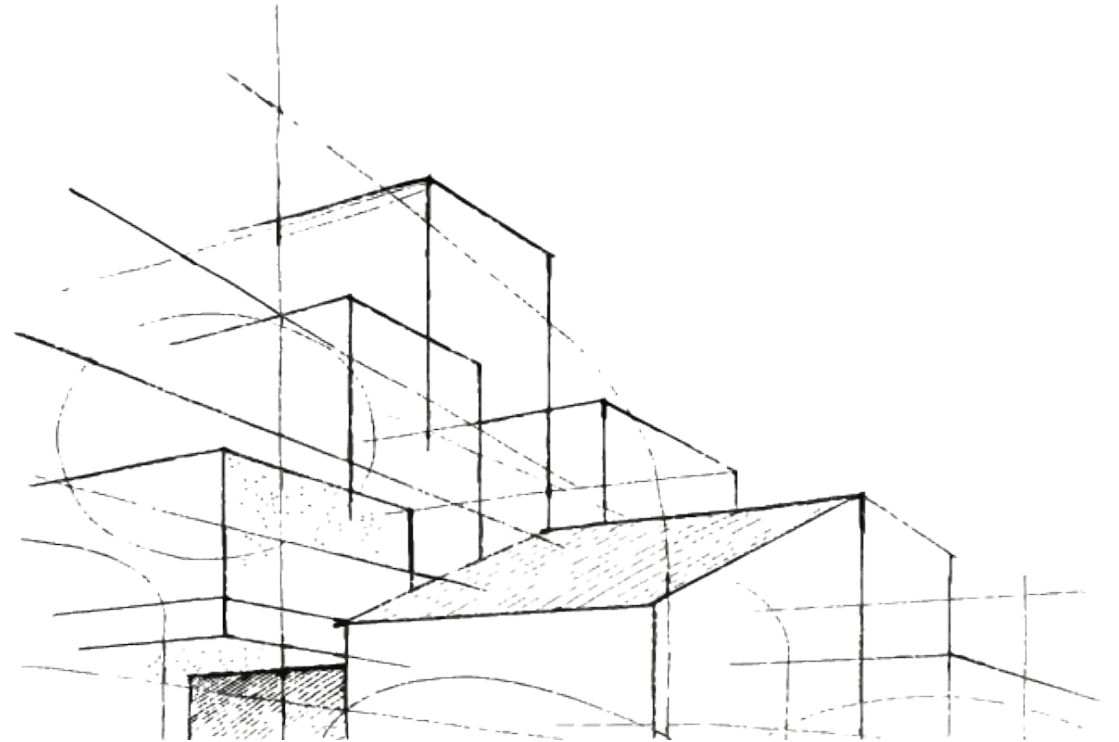
December 19th, 2025





Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Design Challenge Goals
- Timeline
- Eligibility
- Submission Requirements
- Categories
- Prizes
- Scoring Criteria
- Application Requirements
- Questions/Answers



Welcome



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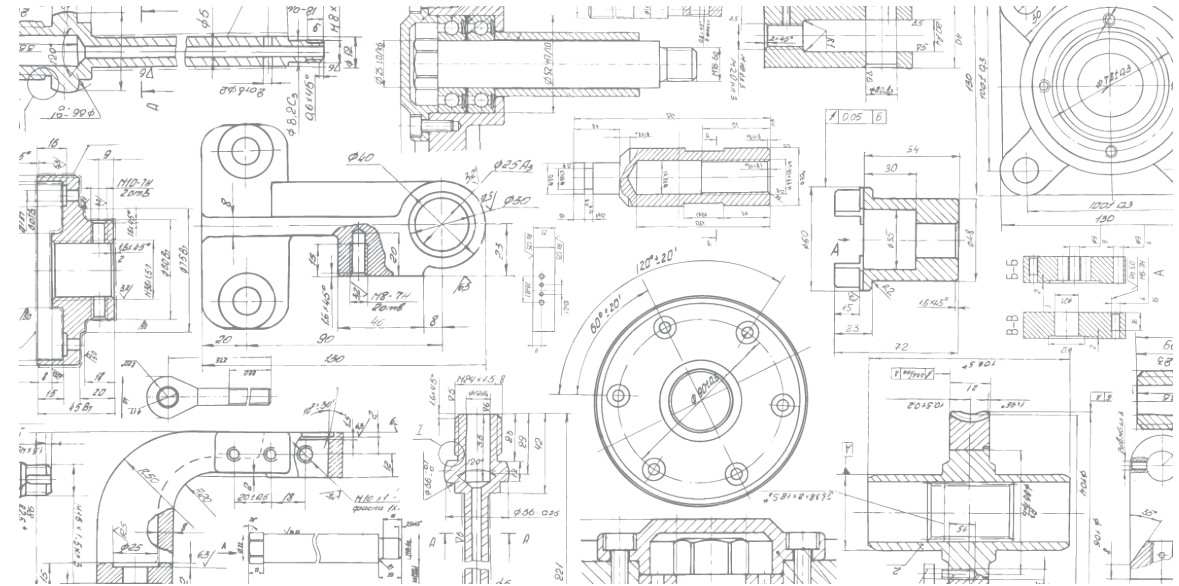


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ADU Design Challenge Goals



- 1) Give property owners easy access to a menu of **high quality ADU design** options.
- 2) Make the ADU design process **more accessible** and **affordable** for property owners.
- 3) **Unlock opportunities** for property owners to explore, design, and build an ADU.





Timeline

This timeline is subject to change at HLC's discretion, if changes take place they will be publicly announced and updated on www.mass.gov/ADUChallenge.

Phase	Dates	Details
Challenge Launch	12/15/2025	Submission period begins.
Submission Window	12/15 2025 – 2/27/2026	Entries may be submitted during this time.
Submissions Due	2/27/2026 at 11:59 pm	Submission window closes.
Jury Review	March 2026	Independent jury evaluations.
Winners Announced	April 2026	Public ceremony and statewide promotion.



- Submissions are welcome from **architects, builders, designers, contractors, and design-build partnerships practicing in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.**
- Applicants may submit as individuals or teams, including those representing multiple firms, organizations, or collaborative entities.
- Applicants must be 18 years of age or older.
- For team submissions involving multiple entities, you must designate a **Lead Applicant** and clearly **identify all partner organizations or individuals** in the submission.

Submission Requirements



How to Apply

- Applicants must submit a complete entry via the [ADU Design Challenge Application Form](#).
- A complete submission must include:
 - Applicant information
 - Project information
 - A Project Narrative describing your design concept (Maximum 1,000 characters)
 - Supplemental Questions to assist with award selection
 - **Attachments A – G** as described in the [Technical Submission Requirements](#) section of the Guidelines
 - Legal documents; Assignment of Copyright and Related Rights, Representations and Assumption of Liability; and Waiver of Claims.

Minimum Requirements



- What type and size of ADU must be submitted?
 - Only detached ADU designs are eligible for consideration.
 - ADUs must include a sleeping area, kitchen, and bathroom.
 - ADUs must be under 900 square feet gross floor area
 - Applicants must select from one of two ADU size categories based on gross floor area.
 - Compact ADU (up to 500 square feet – Studio & 1-bedrooms)
 - Standard ADU (up to 900 square feet – Studio, 1-bedrooms, 2-bedrooms or more)

When calculating square footage, please use the Gross Floor Area definition in the ADU Regulations, located at [760 CMR 71.00](#)



Required Energy Performance Thresholds

This timeline is subject to change at HLC's discretion, if changes take place they will be publicly announced and updated on www.mass.gov/ADUChallenge.

Building Assembly	Minimum R-Value (or R-value alternative)	Maximum U-Factor
Ceiling / Attic	R-49	$U \leq 0.026$
Wood-frame Above-grade Walls	R-20 + R-5 ci or R-13 + R-10 ci or R-20 ci or R-30	$U \leq 0.045$
Basement Wall	R-19 or R-13 + R-5 ci or R-15 ci	$U \leq 0.050$
Crawl Space Wall	R-19 or R-13 + R-5 ci or R-15 ci	$U \leq 0.055$
Fenestration (Windows, Doors, Skylights)		$U \leq 0.30$

Drawing Set Requirements



- A complete submission form will separately attach:
 - Showcase Image
 - Design Challenge Boards (Digital Poster Design)
 - Scaled Floor Plans
 - Exterior Elevations
 - Wall Section
 - Site Plan Contextualization
 - Renderings & Diagrams



Each individual attachment must be under 50 MB.



All attachments must be anonymous and not contain any identifiable information



Attachment A: Showcase Image

- *Format:* PNG, 300 DPI, 50 MB max
- *Quantity:* 1 image/rendering of designer's choice
- *Requirements:* Please choose an image that best highlights your design
- *Purpose:* Will be displayed on HLC's website



Attachment B: Boards

- *Format:* PDF, 24" x 36" landscape orientation, 50 MB max
- *Quantity:* 2 pages minimum, 3 pages maximum
- *Requirements:* Please include:
 - Floor plan at 1/4" scale
 - All exterior elevations at minimum 1/8" scale
 - Site Plan Contextualization
 - Renderings & Diagrams of your choice.
 - Project Narrative (1,000 characters maximum, 12-point font minimum)
 - Inclusion of your wall section is optional.
- This digital poster should highlight the vision and creativity of your design and key components.



Attachment C: Floor Plans

- *Format:* PDF, ¼" scale, 50 MB max
- *Quantity:* No maximum, 1 floor plan per page for each level (if applicable)
- *Requirements:* Show the complete floor layout of the ADU including:
 - Show all levels of the ADU, if applicable
 - Label the use of each room and room size
 - Bedroom(s) must be a minimum area of 70 square feet with the shortest wall no less than 7 feet
 - Minimum ceiling height: 7 feet
 - Location of doors and door width
 - Identify locations of all furniture, fixtures, appliances, and equipment including but not limited to: beds, tables, chairs, cabinets, sinks, showers, toilets, etc.
 - Identify the location of wall section (**Attachment E**)



Attachment D: Elevations

- *Format:* PDF, 1/8" scale minimum, 1/4" scale maximum, 50 MB max
- *Quantity:* No maximum, 1 elevation per page
- *Requirements:*
 - Show all sides of the ADU including identification of materials.
 - ADUs must not exceed 35 feet in height.



Attachment E: Wall Section

- *Format:* PDF, $\frac{3}{4}$ " scale minimum, 50 MB max
- *Quantity:* 1 page maximum
- *Requirements:* Show from the bottom of the foundation to the highest point of the ADU including:
 - Identification of materials
 - Insulation types and Values
 - Framing/Structural System
 - Foundation System



Attachment F: Site Plan

The template for this attachment is found at www.mass.gov/aduchallenge:
[Attachment F: Site Plan Contextualization](#)

- *Format:* Export DWG format to PDF for submission, Scale 1:20, 50 MB max
- *Requirements:* Please select **at least one** of the three scenario parcels (7,000 sq ft, 10,000 sq ft, 22,500 sq ft) found at [Attachment F: Site Plan Contextualization](#) and demonstrate your design meets the following parameters:
 - Principal dwelling footprint (is pre-defined and can be moved) falls within the required setbacks as defined by the black dotted line
 - ADU footprint falls within the required setbacks as defined by the red dotted line.
 - Illustrate the relationship between the ADU footprint and the principal dwelling footprint. ADU must be located a minimum of 10'-0" from the primary residence.
 - *While not required, designers may add additional site features such as but not limited to soft and hard landscaping features and parking.*
 - *Only detached ADU designs are eligible for consideration in the ADU Design Challenge.*



Attachment G: Renderings & Diagrams

- *Format:* PDF, 300 DPI, 50 MB max
- *Quantity:* Up to 10 images maximum, including **at least one exterior, one interior, and one showing the relationship of the ADU to the principal dwelling.**
- *Requirements:* Please order in preference for publication/recognition should your design be selected.



Design Categories

**Applicant should indicate interest in consideration for these categories on their application and answer each supplemental question for that category*

HLC will consider each design for all categories they are eligible for.

- Compact ADU (up to 500 square feet – Studio & 1 bedrooms)
- Standard ADU (up to 900 square feet – Studio, 1-bedrooms, 2-bedrooms or more)
- Sustainable Design*
- Accessible Design*
- Innovative Construction Design (off-site fabrication, panelized construction, volumetric units or a hybrid of these methods)*



Prizes

Thank you to our generous sponsors: AIA Massachusetts, Eastern Bank, The Boston Foundation, and Massachusetts Housing Partnership

Prize Category	Prize
1st Place Challenge Wide	\$20,000.00
2nd Place Challenge Wide	\$15,000.00
3rd Place Challenge Wide	\$10,000.00
Exceptional Compact ADU	\$3,000.00
Exceptional Standard ADU	\$3,000.00
Exceptional Sustainable ADU	\$3,000.00
Exceptional Accessible ADU	\$3,000.00
Exceptional Innovative Construction	\$3,000.00
AIA MA's People's Choice Award	No Monetary Prize



Scoring Criteria

**To be eligible for consideration, a submission must meet all the Submission Requirements detailed in the Submission Guidelines*

Winning Designs Will Score Highly on the Scoring Rubric *including the following criteria but not limited to:*

- Be clear, compelling and well-organized
- Maximize functionality and comfort living in a compact space
- Embrace Massachusetts's ADU goals: cost-effective, sustainable, accessible, and accommodate all types of families
- Shows excellence in daylighting, ventilation, circulation, and use of multi-functional space.
- Employ feasible and replicable design processes and materials
- Renderings are appealing including but not limited to modern, historic, or architecture that is responsive to Massachusetts typologies.
- Be adaptable and feasible across a variety of lot sizes in Massachusetts.

Scoring Category	Points (max 100)
Design Quality & Vision	30
Presentation	15
Livability	20
Feasibility & Affordability	20
Sustainability	15

Application: Applicant Information



Step 1 of 4

Section 1: Applicant information

Information you submit on this page will be used to track your submission and contact you, but will not be shared with judges. Submissions are open to Massachusetts-based architects, builders, designers, contractors, and design-build partnerships.

1.1 Lead Applicant Name(s) (Required)

Individuals: Please provide your first and last name. Teams: Please identify the Lead Applicant (first and last name) and list all other team members below.

First

Last

Additional Applicant Names

Design Firm Name (If Applicable)

Provide:

- Lead Applicant Name(s)
- Design Firm Name, if applicable
- Affirmation of eligibility
 - Massachusetts-based
 - 18+
- E-mail
- Address

**ENTER THE MASSACHUSETTS
ADU DESIGN CHALLENGE:**
www.mass.gov/forms/submit-adu-design-challenge-entry

Application: Project Information



- Project Design/Title
- ADU Gross Floor Area
- Studio, 1-bed, 2-bed+
- ADU Height
- Window/Wall Ratio
- Foundation Type
- Certification of adherence to required energy performance thresholds

Application: Project Narrative & Supplemental Questions



Section 3: Project Narrative and Attachments

Information you submit on this page will be shared with the judges. Please do not include identifying information on this page, or you may be required to resubmit or disqualified.

3.1 Project Narrative: Describe your overall design concept (max 1000 characters) (Required)

0 of 1000 max characters

3.2 Describe any design choices you made to promote a functional and comfortable living environment in your ADU (max 1000 characters)

(Required)

0 of 1000 max characters

3.3 Describe any design choices you made to promote cost-effectiveness in your ADU (max 1000 characters)

(Required)

0 of 1000 max characters

Application: Category- Specific Supplemental Questions



3.4.1 Describe any design choices you made to promote sustainability in your ADU (max 1000 characters)

(Required)

0 of 1000 max characters

3.4.2 Describe any design choices you made to promote accessibility and universal design in your ADU

(Required)

0 of 1000 max characters

3.4.3 Describe any design choices you made to facilitate innovative construction methods for your ADU

(Required)

0 of 1000 max characters

Application: Attachments




Attachments

Please label each attachment using the following format:

AttachmentLetter_ProjectDesignName (for example, AttachmentA_GreenADU). Information you submit on this page will be shared with the judges. Please do not include identifying information in any of your attachments, or you may be required to resubmit or disqualified. Attachments may take a moment to load. To continue to the next section of your application, ensure that all attachments are fully uploaded, as indicated by the green check mark and 100% bar underneath the attachment upload link.

3.5 Attachment A: Showcase Image (Required)



Drop files here or

SELECT FILES

Accepted file types: png, Max. file size: 50 MB.

- All files 50 mb max
- Label each attachment using the correct format
- Use the right file type
- Attachments take a moment to fully upload and application will not let you proceed until all files are fully uploaded

Application: Submission Agreements



- In order to finalize the Submission, the Submitter must execute certain documents with legal effect, including the following, as part of their application form:
 - Assignment of Copyright and Related Rights
 - Representations and Assumption of Liability
 - Waiver of Claims.
- Prior to submission, applicants should review this language in the posted [Submission Agreements](http://www.mass.gov/aduchallenge) on www.mass.gov/aduchallenge

Next steps

- Download the full Submission Guidelines at www.mass.gov/aduchallenge
- Submit all questions via email to: EOHLCADUHomes@mass.gov with the subject line “ADU Design Challenge”
- All submission due **February 27th, 11:59 PM**

Coming Up

- FAQs on www.mass.gov/aduchallenge
- Missed our first webinar session? [Register](#) for the 2nd Design Challenge Webinar on **Thursday, Jan. 15, from 6 to 7 p.m.** Same content, new chance to attend.

**ENTER THE MASSACHUSETTS
ADU DESIGN CHALLENGE:
www.mass.gov/aduchallenge**



QUESTIONS & NEXT STEPS

