

# Farmworker Housing

## What is farmworker housing?

Farmworker housing is housing provided to agricultural employees, either seasonal or year-round, who live and work on farmland. Any type of housing that complies with King County Code—yurt, farmhouse, or accessory dwelling unit, can be permitted as farmworker housing. With a Washington Department of Health license, trailers can also be used to house seasonal workers.

Permits for farmworker housing depends on farm location and the buildings and utilities that are already on the farm, but most importantly, on whether employees are seasonal or year-round.

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# Seasonal Farmworker Housing



Housing for seasonal farmworkers is referred to as Temporary Worker Housing (TWH) in Washington State Department of Health (DOH) regulations. Housing for temporary (< 10 month) workers is provided an exemption from county zoning code, except for setbacks from property lines and DOH requirements.

> Setbacks refer to the distance of a structure from the property line or curb

**A license from DOH is required. License conditions include:**

- > The site must be adequately drained and not subject to periodic flooding.
- > Housing must be located at least 500' away from where livestock are kept.
- > Housing must be located at least 200' away from all surface water.



## STRUCTURES

Housing, if stick built\* or mobile home, must comply with county building codes.

- Other structures (e.g., yurt, recreational vehicle, etc.) need to meet construction standards in Washington Administrative Code 246-359 and be inspected by DOH Construction Review Services.
- Temporary structures in the floodway need to be removed between Sept 30 – May 1 of each year.
- Existing nonresidential buildings can be used for temporary worker housing if a building permit is obtained for "change of use\*\*."



## WASTE DISPOSAL

Temporary Worker Housing must be hooked up to suitable sewage disposal system approved by Public Health – Seattle & King County.

- A 3,000-gallon concrete vault set at zero grade is acceptable.
- Composting toilets that comply with King County Code 13.52.020 are allowed.



## WATER SUPPLY

The water supply for temporary worker housing must be approved by Public Health – Seattle & King County.

DOH requires testing within 90 days of occupancy and annually thereafter.

- Bacteriological and nitrate test results must be submitted with the TWH license application.

\*Stick built refers to a wooden-framed structure that's been constructed piece by piece.

\*\* Visit <https://mybuildingpermit.com> to apply for or check on the status of a building permit application.

# Year Round Farmworker Housing



Year-round employees have a traditional landlord-tenant relationship with the farmer. King County Code allows on-farm Agricultural Employee Dwelling Units (AEDU). These are small (< 1,000 ft<sup>2</sup>) homes for agricultural employees working on the farm year-round.

- > **King County Code allows for an Agricultural Employee Dwelling Unit (AEDU) on a parcel where zoning would not otherwise allow a residence. Special restrictions apply in flood areas – see FAQ's.**



## STRUCTURES

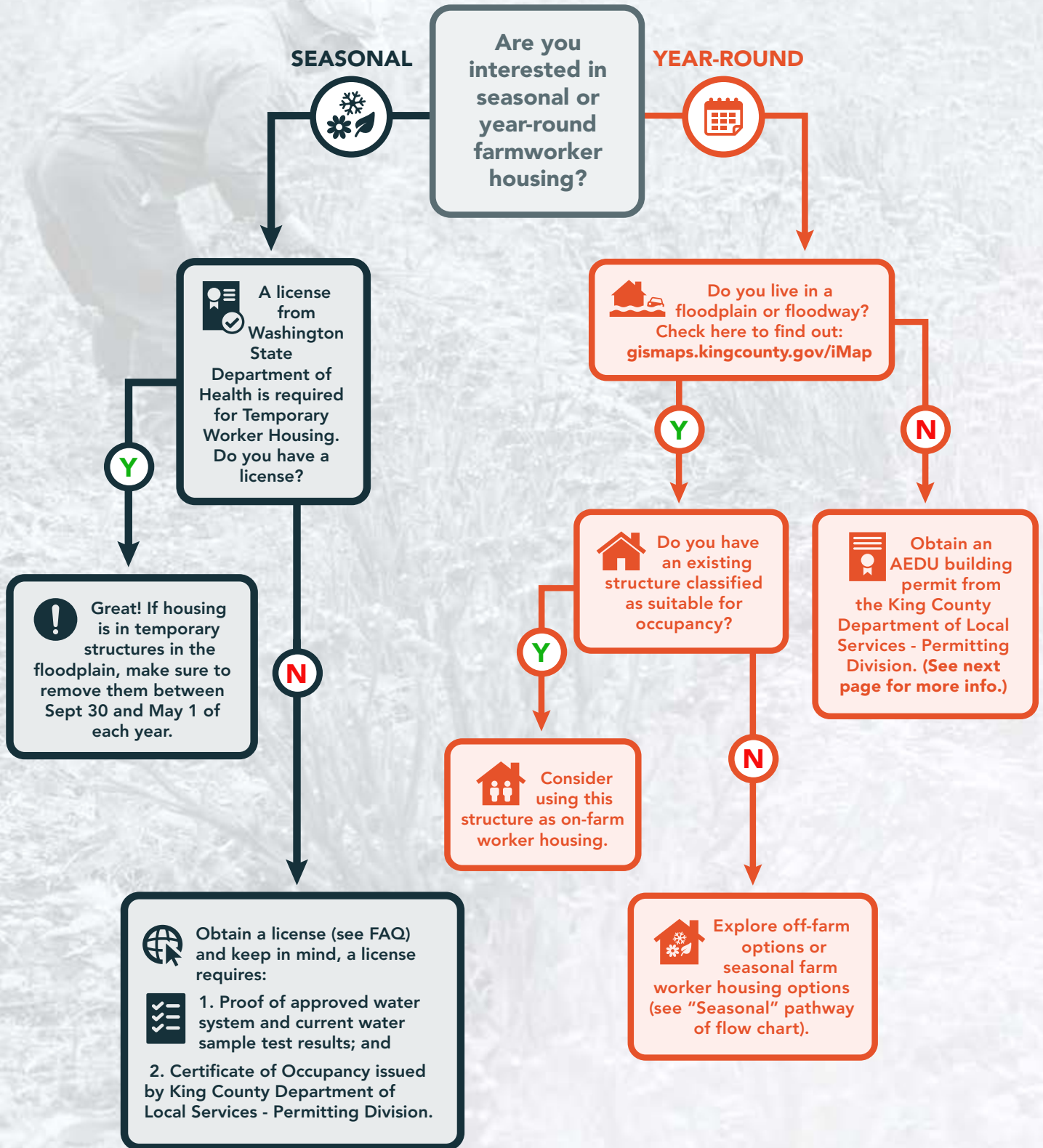
AEDUs must comply with King County Building Code and be less than 1000 ft<sup>2</sup> and occupied by < 8 employees. The number of allowable units depends on the size of the operation:

- **1 AEDU on a site < 20 acres (ac.)**
- **2 AEDUs on a site > 20 ac. and < 50 ac.**
- **3 AEDUs on a site > 50 ac. and < 100 ac.**
- **4 AEDUs on a site > 100 ac.**

One additional AEDU is allowed for each additional 100 acres. The housing should be located on already used non-farmable areas. The AEDU can be a mobile home or a stick-built home.



# Farmworker Housing: Workflow and Regulatory Considerations



# Farmworker Housing: Frequently Asked Questions



## How do I apply for Temporary Worker Housing?

Please complete and submit the application materials available online at this link:

 [www.doh.wa.gov/crs](http://www.doh.wa.gov/crs)

### Application materials:

1. Construction Review Application Packet
2. Camp Management Plan for Temporary Worker Housing
3. Temporary Worker Housing License Application, which requires:
  - > *Proof of approved water system and current water sample test results*
  - > *Certificate of Occupancy issued by a city, county, or state agency*

## How do I apply for an Agricultural Employee Dwelling Unit?

AEDUs require a building permit. Building permits are issued by the King County Department of Local Services-Permitting Division (DLS-PD). The process can be started online at this link:

 <https://mybuildingpermit.com>

## Can I build farmworker housing in the floodplain?

For year-round farmworker housing, an AEDU cannot be built in a floodway. In the floodplain, an AEDU would need to be elevated. For more info visit:

 [www.kingcounty.gov/agdwellingpermits](http://www.kingcounty.gov/agdwellingpermits)

To obtain a license to build temporary worker housing, the desired site must be adequately drained and not subject to periodic flooding. King County has a Flood Buyout and Elevation Program to raise structures above the base flood elevation. Please visit the following link to learn more:

 [www.kingcounty.gov/fbeprogram](http://www.kingcounty.gov/fbeprogram)

## Contact Us

King County Agricultural Program

 [farmhelp@kingcounty.gov](mailto:farmhelp@kingcounty.gov)  206-477-4800  [www.kingcounty.gov/agprogram](http://www.kingcounty.gov/agprogram)

Farm King County

 For resources and information related to permitting and regulations, visit <https://www.farmkingcounty.org/permitting-regulations.html>.