ADUSTACK · FREE GUIDE

ADU Price Comparison Checklist

Two ADU quotes can look similar and cover very different scopes. Use this checklist to compare builders line by line, so you know what each price actually includes before you choose.

How to use it

1. Print one copy for each builder you're considering.
2. For each item, mark whether it's **Included** in the quoted price, an **Additional** cost, or **Unclear**.
3. Write the quoted amount or allowance next to it.
4. Ask each builder to answer anything marked Unclear in writing.

Builder | Model or plan | Size (sq ft) | Quote date

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1. Design and engineering

Item	Included	Additional	Unclear	Quote or allowance ($)
Architectural plans for your lot	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Structural engineering	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Title 24 energy report	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Site plan and survey, if required	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Revisions after plan-check comments	☐	☐	☐	$ _____

2. Permits, plan checks, and agency fees

Item	Included	Additional	Unclear	Quote or allowance ($)
Building permit and plan check	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
School district fees	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
City impact fees (ADUs over 750 sq ft)	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Water and sewer agency fees, if any	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Fire department review or sprinklers, if required	☐	☐	☐	$ _____

3. Foundation, soil, grading, and site access

Item	Included	Additional	Unclear	Quote or allowance ($)
Soils report	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Foundation (type: _____)	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Excavation, grading, and soil haul-away	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Drainage or retaining walls, if needed	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Tree removal, if needed	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Access: narrow side yard, hand digging, or crane	☐	☐	☐	$ _____

4. Water, sewer, electrical, and utility connections

Item	Included	Additional	Unclear	Quote or allowance ($)
Trenching (length included: _____ ft)	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Water line to the ADU	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Sewer connection (tie-in, new lateral, or pump)	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Electrical subpanel and feeder	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
PG&E service or main panel upgrade	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Separate meters, if required	☐	☐	☐	$ _____

5. Prefab delivery, crane, and installation (where applicable)

Item	Included	Additional	Unclear	Quote or allowance ($)
Factory unit price	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Delivery and transport permits	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Crane (maximum reach included: _____ ft)	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Setting and installation on site	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Sales tax on the unit	☐	☐	☐	$ _____

6. HVAC, kitchens, bathrooms, finishes, fixtures, and appliances

Item	Included	Additional	Unclear	Quote or allowance ($)
Heating and cooling (heat pump or other)	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Kitchen cabinets and countertops	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Appliances included (list): _____	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Bathroom tile, fixtures, and vanities	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Flooring, windows, and doors	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Finish allowances and upgrade pricing	☐	☐	☐	$ _____

7. Inspections, completion, and scope exclusions

Item	Included	Additional	Unclear	Quote or allowance ($)
City inspections through final sign-off	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Utility final and meter release	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Cleanup and debris haul-away	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Restoring landscaping or hardscape	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Warranty: who provides it, and for how long	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
Written list of exclusions	☐	☐	☐	$ _____
How change orders are priced and approved	☐	☐	☐	$ _____

The question to ask every builder

"What is the estimated total cost to reach final inspection and a move-in-ready ADU on my property?"

Written answer: $ _____ Date: _____ Includes a contingency? Yes / No

Also ask for in writing: the deposit amount and payment schedule, how payments tie to completed work, the expected timeline, and the license number of the contractor who will build the ADU.

Actual costs depend on your site conditions, your city and utility requirements, and the upgrades you choose. A feasibility study or site visit is the best way to turn an estimate into a firm number.



Already have a quote? Get a free personal bid review.
Send us the bid you received and we'll email you a summary of what it covers, what's unclear, and what to ask your builder. Reviewed by a person. No obligation.
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