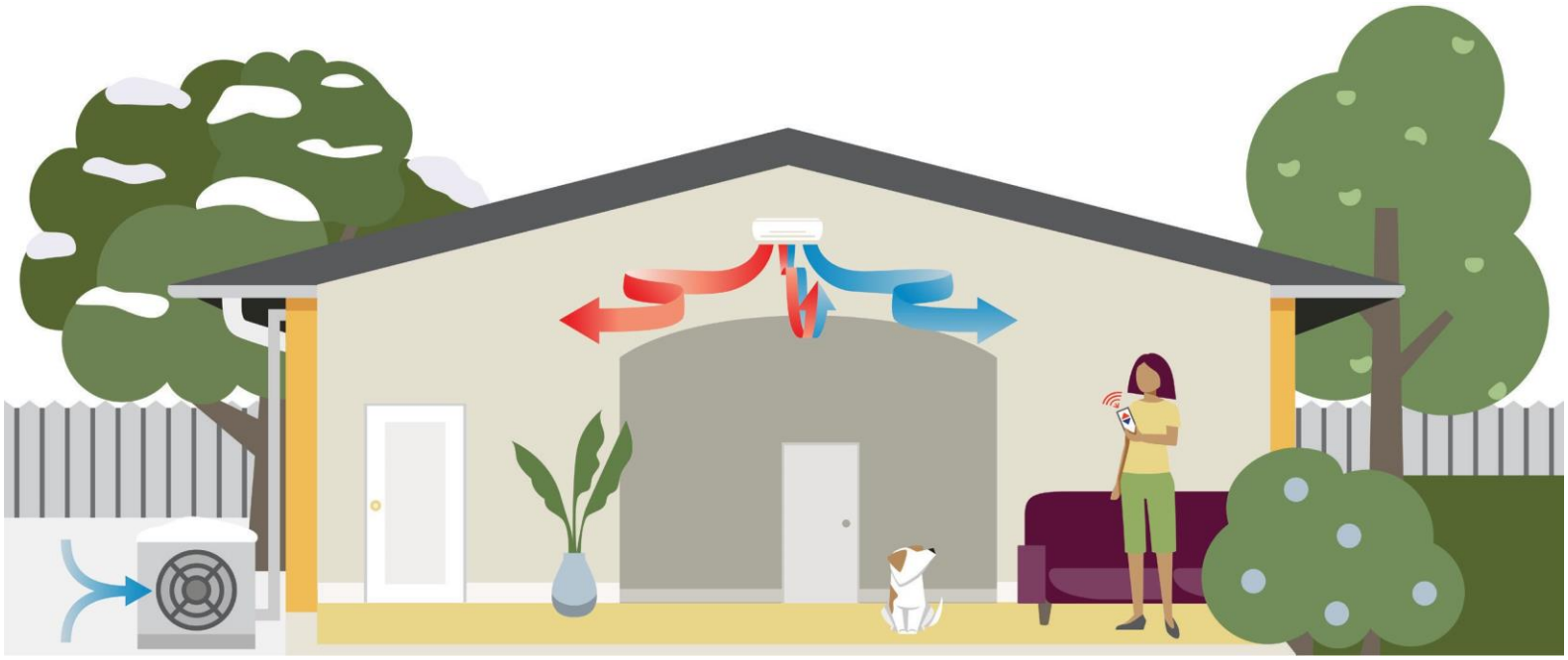
DUCTLESS HEAT PUMP BUYER'S GUIDE

A ductless heat pump delivers all year long. In winter, it keeps you warm. In summer, it keeps you cool. And as far as monthly bills are concerned, a ductless heat pump delivers by using half the energy. So, if you're ready to go ductless, we're ready to help.



DUCTLESS
HEATING & COOLING SYSTEMS

lighting design lab

CHOOSING AN **INSTALLER**

Choosing the best installer for your new ductless system doesn't have to be overwhelming.Follow the steps below to help ensure you get the service and price you expect.

1. RESEARCH THE BASICS

Research online to learn how ductless heating and cooling systems work, what benefits they provide compared to other heating and cooling systems, and whether or not they're a good fit for your home.

2. CONTACT YOUR UTILITY

Your local electric utility can be a great resource for rebates, installer referrals and recommended best practices for choosing and maintaining a ductless system.

3. FIND PROMOTIONS

Ask installers providing a bid if they have any promotional offers or go directly toductless heat pump manufacturer websites to find available promotions.

4. ASK FOR REFERRALS

Contact your local electric utility to inquire if they manage a trusted trade ally list. Then ask your friends or neighbors if they have had a good experience with a ductless system install. Social media sites like Nextdoor, Reddit and Facebook are good for soliciting referrals from your friends, family and the greater community.

5. INVESTIGATE YOUR OPTIONS

Find out more about potential installers using sites suchas Yelp, Google, and Angie's List that post ratings and reviews. You may also want to see how long the installerhas been in business, check the Better Business Bureau for any complaints, and check your state licensing board to confirm licenses and certifications.

6. INTERVIEW POTENTIAL INSTALLERS

Speak with installers over the phone before getting an estimate and use this opportunity to get any additional information or have questions answered.

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7. GET MULTIPLE BIDS

Whether you seek out bids from more than one installer or bids on different solutions or productbrands from the same installer, multiple bids can help you get the most competitive price. Ask each installer if they're providing a bid (usually a fixed price) or an estimate (which can change significantly depending on what happens during the installation). Review our tips on "How to Analyze a Bid" (p. 5).

8. CHOOSE YOUR INSTALLER

Make the best decision for your needs and your home based on your comfort level with each installer, brands they offer, their experience with ductless systems, any industry-recognized training and certifications, and their ability to listen to your questions and concerns. Then make sure to get pricing, payment options and bid details in writing before you proceed.

Remember, the lowest price is not always the best choice. By using these steps above as a guide,you'll be on track to get the end result you want, at a price you are comfortable with, and with an installer that you trust.

WHY GO **DUCTLESS?**

Monthly savings on your energy bill

Increased comfort year-round

Heating and cooling in one system

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR **INSTALLER**

Asking potential installers the right questions will help you get the best service and the best price. Use these commonly asked questions to develop your own list. Their answers can help you make an informed decision on the right installer and ductless heat pump unit for your home.

☑ PRE-ASSESSMENT CONVERSATION

- ☐ What brands and product lines do you carry, and what do you see as the benefits of each?
- ☐ Is there a showroom or nearby site where I can see an installed unit to understand better how ductless heat pumps work?
- ☐ How many ductless heat pumps, like the one I'm interested in, have you installed in the last two years? *[10 or more is ideal]*
- ☐ Do you have a list of written references from satisfied customers I can read?
- ☐ Are there any manufacturer promotions you can offer for this job?
- ☐ Are you aware of utility rebates?
- ☐ Do you offer financing?
- ☐ Do you offer an extended warranty?

TIPS ON REDUCING INSTALLATION COSTS:

1. Check with your utility for available rebates.
2. Ask your installer if they are running a promotion.

DURING THE ASSESSMENT VISIT

- [ ] Will I need to do anything to prepare for installation? Will I need to do anything after installation? (e.g., move furniture, paint, etc.)
- [ ] What size and what type of indoor head do you recommend for my home?
  - Size refers to heating/cooling capacity. A one-ton system can often serve a home's main living space adequately.
  - Your installer will know the recommended distance between your indoor and outdoor units.
- [ ] Where do you recommend placement of my indoor head and outdoor unit?
  - Poor indoor head placement in a room can diminish head performance and efficiency.
  - Keep in mind there is a limit to the distance between the indoor head and its connected outdoor unit.
- [ ] Does installation require a permit?
- [ ] Should I get a system rated for cold climates and extreme weather conditions?
  - This is generally recommended for regions east of the Cascade Range, in elevations above 3,000 feet, or in special situations where the home heating system lacks capacity to provide back-up heat and run the new ductless unit.
- [ ] Can you provide three potential system configurations ranked as "good-better-best" based on pricing, performance, and benefits?
  - The "good-better-best" options could include different brands, different product lines of the same brand, or different system sizing or configuration.
- [ ] What temperature differential should I expect between the main living space and the surrounding rooms?
- [ ] Do you recommend any accessories or optimal system enhancements? What are their pros and cons?
- [ ] How long will the installation take?

HOW TO ANALYZE **A BID**

Whether you're analyzing a bid from one installer or comparing several options, a few simple tips can help you know what to look for in a ductless heat pump bid. Use this guide to make sure the bid or estimate matches up with what the installer has told you during your conversations and assessments.

Some utilities allow participating installers to pass along incentives directly to customers as an instant rebate, which will show up as a line item on your bid. Ask if utility incentives are included inthe bid, or if you will need to apply for them separately. If applied for separately, ask if the installer can assist you in completing the paperwork correctly.

COMMON ITEMS ON THE BID TO REVIEW:

Look for contractor contact info, including phone and/or email.

Look for the sales person's name.

Ask for a line-item bid that lists each component cost individually.

Read the fine print. Notes and special clauses could alter price.

Bid

Dan's Awesome DHPs
We install, you enjoy!

Tacoma, WA
253.123.4567
DADHP@email.com

INVOICE # 475
DATE: 1.1.19

Exp: 4.1.19

TO Homeowner
Tacoma, WA
253.987.6543
Customer ID No. 1234

Jane Estimator	Homeowner's DHP	Financed via PayPal	1/3 down, monthly by 15th

QTY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE	LINE TOTAL
1	18k Outdoor compressor, model MVP 123456789	1,600.00	1,600
1	18k Indoor head, model MVPind 987654321	1,300.00	1,300
18	Linear feet lineset cover	25.33	456
	New breaker, wiring, electrical labor	250.00	250
	Pad and 6-inch risers	150.00	150
	Shutoff switch	98.00	98
	Minor trim carpentry	75.00	75
	Permits/fees	100.00	100
		SUBTOTAL	4,029
		SALES TAX	6.5%
		SUBTOTAL	4,290.89
		UTILITY REBATE	-350.00
		TOTAL	3,940.89

Quotation prepared by: Jane Estimator

This is a quotation on the goods named, subject to the conditions noted below: Describe any conditions pertaining to these prices and any additional terms of the agreement. You may want to include contingencies that will affect the quotation.

To accept this quotation, sign here and return:

THANK YOU FOR YOUR BUSINESS!

Make sure the invoice or bid number is printed out for reference.

Ask how long the bid is valid for.

Make sure financing and payment terms are clear and understandable.

Ask clarifying questions about permits, taxes and rebates.

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR INSTALLER

- [ ] Does the bid include all of the items we discussed in person, on the phone and via email?

- [ ] Can I receive answers in writing to all questions (in the bid/estimate, emails, assessment report)?

- [ ] What should I expect during the installation?
  - What noise, time, and disruption should I prepare for?
  - Will I need to do any finish painting, trim work, or cleanup?

- [ ] Can you explain the system specifications to me?
  - Size of system (installed systems are typically between 9,000—24,000Btus)
  - Accessories or special features such as a surge protector, wall thermostat or WiFi capability
  - System efficiency and extended temperature capacity (e.g., HSPF, cold climate capability)
  - Any parts or labor warranties

- [ ] What's it like living with the ductless heat pump?
  - What will the system sound like when it is running?
  - Where will the condensate go?
  - What are my controls options?
  - What kind of maintenance and upkeep will my new system require?

PRICING FACTOR CHEAT SHEET

A number of factors can contribute to a ductless system's price. Our Pricing Factor Cheat Sheet uses dollar signs to represent estimates for average cost impacts.

$ = <$100 $$ = $100-$750 $$$ = >$750

BASIC INSTALLATION COSTS		
CONTRIBUTING FACTOR	**COST**	**NOTE**
Local requirements/ codes	$	Some jurisdictions require additional work and parts, such as seismic straps.
Taxes and permit fees	$	Each state, municipality, and jurisdiction may have different taxes and permit fees that can add as much as 12% to the basic install cost.
Difficulty or complexity of installation	$$	Unstable environments, steep grading of surrounding soil, second story installations, and installations through asbestos siding or lead-painted walls may all impact cost.
Efficiency rating	$$	In most cases, an HSPF (efficiency rating) of 9.0 or higher is enough to deliver heating and cooling efficiently. Systems with efficiencies at 11.0 or higher may have a higher upfront cost but offer lower operating costs.
Proximity of outdoor unit to indoor head	$$	A standard refrigerant line length is about 25 feet. If the distance exceeds that length or the lines must be run through attics or crawl spaces, costs may be higher.
Access to competitive bids	$$$	Getting just a single bid or having access to only a single installer in your area may lead to a less competitive price.
Interior head type (wall, ceiling, etc.)	$$$	Ductless heat pumps are most commonly installed with a high wall-mounted head. Low wall-mount and ceiling-mount options are also available but may cost more than high wall-mount heads.
Brand/Manufacturer	$-$$$	Some ductless brands have higher associated costs than others, particularly when additional features are included.
Electrical upgrades	$-$$$	In some homes, upgrading the electrical panel or wiring will be needed to safely provide the required power.
Size of system	$$-$$$	West of the Cascade Range, if your home needs a system larger than 15,000 BTUs, costs will be above the average. East of the Cascade Range, the same can be said for systems larger than 18,000 BTUs.

PRICING FACTOR **CHEAT SHEET**

OPTIONAL FEATURES		
CONTRIBUTING FACTOR	**COST**	**NOTE**
Pan heaters (for defrost)	$	In colder climates (typically east of the Cascade Range) or at high elevations, heaters keep your system from freezing up.
Remote thermostat	$	Can improve occupant comfort by sensing the temperature in the whole room as opposed to at the indoor head's location.
Service contract	$	Maintain the efficiency and extend the life of your system with regular maintenance visits from your installer.
Surge protectors	$	If you live in an area with frequent power outages, this can protect your system from damage.
App and cloud access	$$	For people who want remote access to their system.
Extended warranty	$$	For people that expect to be in the home for 10+ years after installation.
Occupancy sensors	$$	Useful if you're away from your home for extended periods of time.
Snow legs/wall mount	$$	For locations with potential for > 3" of snow regularly or > 5" occasionally.
Wall mounted controller	$$	Option if you're supplementing an existing baseboard heating system.
Cold climate model	$$$	This allows the system to maintain performance and operate efficiently at colder temperatures (east of the Cascade Range) or at higher elevations, or if the back-up heat in your primary living space does not work.