



Are you comparing solar quotes? Here's a checklist to help!

## COST COMPARISON

System Cost	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Size of proposed installation. (i.e., 10 kW)			
Base cost of proposed installation (without incentives)			
Federal Tax Credit			
Other local incentives			
Final cost (base cost minus incentives)			

### Why it matters:

**System Size:** Your system should be designed to find the sweet spot where you are saving the most money and seeing the best return on your investment.

**Tax Credit and Incentive Breakout:** It's important to understand how incentives are factored into your quoted system price.

Savings Calculations	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Long-term savings estimates			
Resources used for calculating power production, and is shade factored in?	Aurora, PV Watts		
Cost per kwh used to calculate electric value			
Rate increase used for projected savings.			
Time period used to calculate long-term savings (If different, ask the salesperson to adjust time frame to match other estimates.)	25-year		
Are string inverter replacement costs figured in?			

**Why it matters:** To accurately compare numbers, the same variables should be used to calculate projections.

**Calculations:** SunSource provides a 25-year projected savings to match your comprehensive labor, and equipment warranty, so it's a reliable number with little or no chance of unexpected repair costs during that time. SunSource also uses conservative inflation and energy values to give an accurate representation of expected savings.

**Production estimates:** Relying on more than one source of information for power production models results in more accurate numbers. SunSource cross-references PV Watts with Aurora to calculate energy production numbers, factoring in shade, snow, etc. for trustworthy, realistic and accurate projections.

Financing comparison	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Monthly payment if tax credits and incentives applied to the loan			
Monthly payment without incentives applied			
Term + interest rate			
If paying cash, has a cash discount been applied?			

**Why it matters:** Financing options are diverse. Customers interested in financing are typically looking for the lowest expense over the life of the system. Often the best way to accomplish that is to pay a little more up front for a lower-interest loan. Ask your SunSource consultant to explain the best option for your financial goals.

## QUALITY CONSIDERATIONS

Warranty Information	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Labor warranty – how long the company will maintain and repair your equipment	25-year (residential)		
Is there a service fee for warranty work?	No		
Solar panel power warranty	25-year		
Inverter or microinverters warranty	25-year		
Are warranties transferrable upon sale of home?	Yes		

**Why it matters:**

**Labor Warranty:** If your labor warranty expires, you may be charged labor repair costs, even if the product is still under warranty. Many labor warranties are only 10 years, but SunSource’s 25-year labor warranty means we’ll be there at no charge if your equipment fails. *(See our contract for full terms.)*

**Panel Warranty:** Most solar panels have 25-year power production warranties ranging from 80% - 91%, depending on the brand and model.

**Inverter or Microinverter:** String inverters typically only have 10-12 year warranties and are prone to failing. SunSource installs Enphase Microinverters, which are warranted for 25 years, for an extra 15 years of secure energy production.

**Things to watch for:** Ask if the manufacturer warranties are pro-rated. If so, they may only pay a fraction of the “warranty replacement” costs of the panel or inverter replacement. Also, many labor warranties only pay a small fixed fee around \$150-250, again only a small fraction of the actual cost of the work.

*See information starting on page 4 for the production, reliability and safety factors that make Enphase microinverters the clear choice!*

Company Information	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
In business since...	2011		
Local or regional office?	Yes		
Office run on solar?	Yes		
Average Google Review Rating	5 Star		
Average Facebook Review Rating	5 Star		

**Why it matters:** A trustworthy solar company has experience, and will around for the long-haul, able to respond quickly to concerns with your system. Longevity demonstrates expertise, commitment and stability.

**Pro tip:** When reading a company’s reviews, click on the name of the reviewer to evaluate if the reviews are authentic or paid reviews.

Does the company have on-staff:	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Structural engineer?	Yes		
Master electrician?	Yes		
Architects?	Yes		
Installation crews?	Yes		
Does the company outsource any of their installation?	No		

**Why it matters:**

A company with staff expertise demonstrates pride of ownership and commitment to long-term customer satisfaction. The employees care about each and every project. Also, if a company uses outside contractors, be sure to ask if the labor warranty covers service charges for repair and warranty work.

## EQUIPMENT COMPARISONS

Solar Panels			
Annual degradation (smaller numbers are best)			
Solar panel power warranty at year 25			
Warranty			
Brand			
Solar Panel Color			
Frame Color			

**Why it matters:** Degradation and the power production guarantee tell you how long your panels will perform, and how much production capability they will lose over time. Look for lower annual degradation rates, and higher power production guarantees.

**Panel Warranty:** Most solar panels have 25-year power production warranties ranging from 84% - 94%, depending on the brand and model.

Microinverters or String Inverters	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Microinverters or String Inverter?	Microinverters		
If string, are DC optimizers included?	N/A		
Microinverter or string inverter equipment warranty	25 years		
Does labor warranty cover microinverter or string inverter replacement?	Yes		

**Why it matters:**

Microinverters are the clear choice for today’s modern solar owner. Why? Because **microinverters are more reliable, higher production, have longer warranties, and if one happens to fail, the rest keep working.**

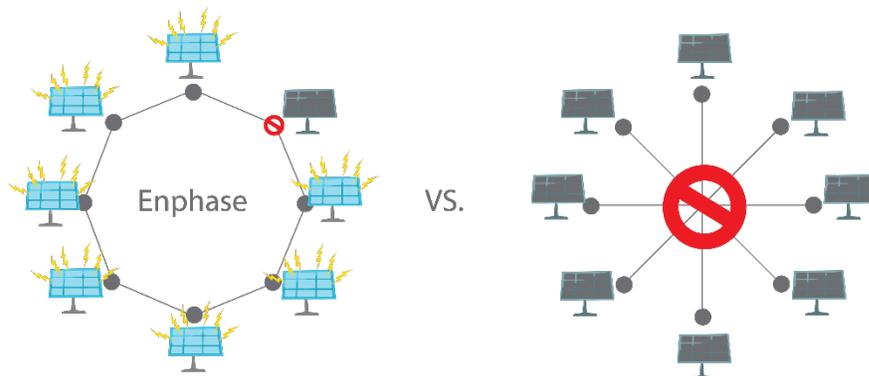
Even FEMA has chimed in, recommending microinverters as the best option in storm-prone areas.

With string inverters, any sort of compromise, such as the passing of a cloud or a frisbee on the roof, affects the entire string. DC optimizers help mitigate shade but don’t completely eliminate the impact.

The biggest difference is that when a string inverter goes bad the entire system will stop operating until it’s repaired or replaced. A system with a microinverter that fails will continue to work at nearly full capacity.

COMPARING MICROINVERTERS TO STRING INVERTERS	Microinverters	String Inverters (with or without optimizers)
Number per system	One for each panel	One inverter supports multiple panels.
Single point of failure?	No	Yes
FEMA recommendation*	Best	Not recommended
Safety?	Low-voltage, Lower fire risk*	High voltage
If one stops working?	The rest continue to operate at full capacity.	The entire system is compromised
Warranty	25 years	Usually 10-12 years

*\*sources: enphase.com and fema.gov*



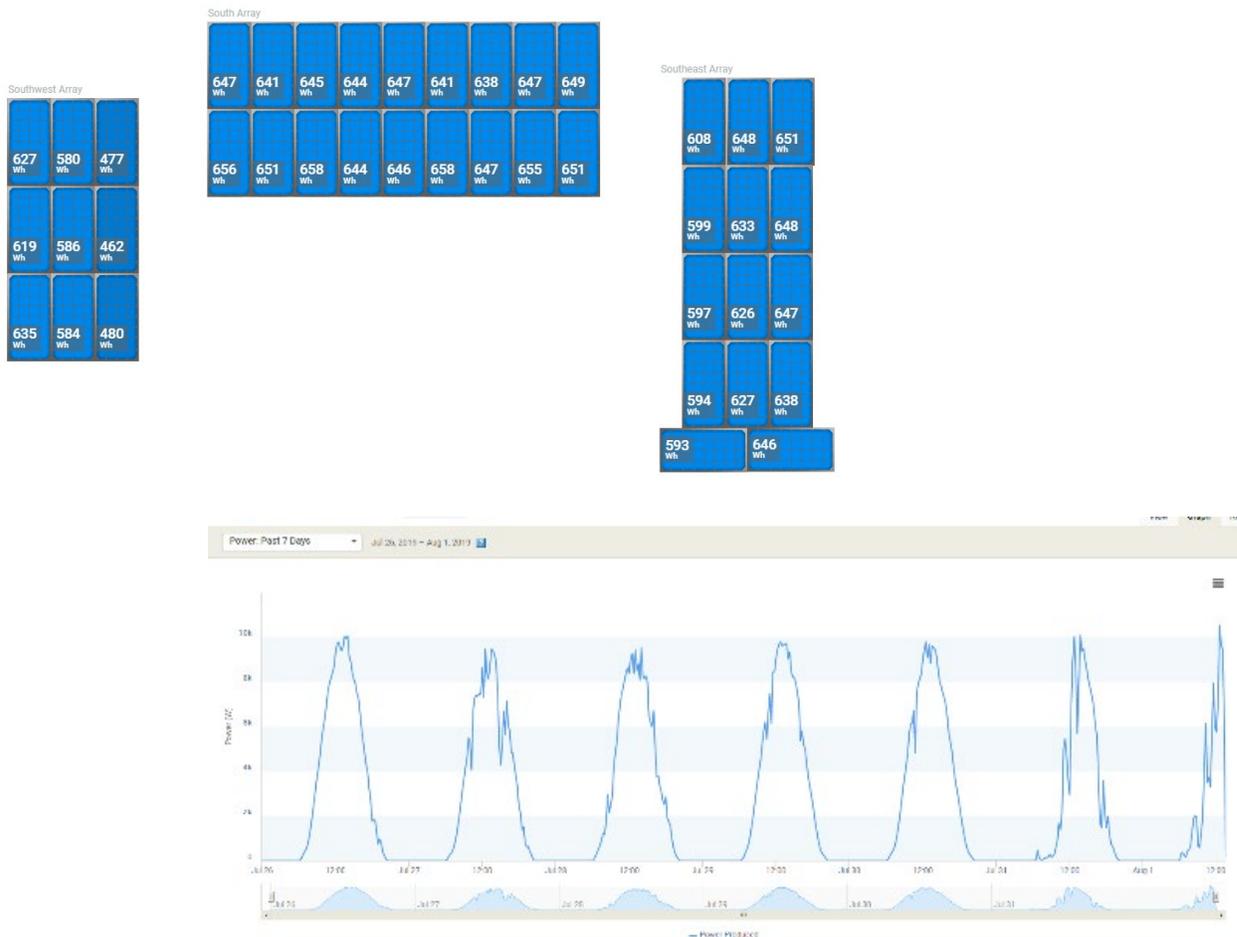
Monitoring Software	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Will you have access to the monitoring software?	Yes		
Does the monitoring software provide detailed monitoring information about each panel on your system?	Yes		
Does the company monitor its installations and proactively react when trouble is identified?	Yes		

**Why it matters:**

Great monitoring will show you how much energy your system is producing as a whole, and also diagnose and pinpoint any portions of the system that are underperforming. Ask to see the system monitoring before you choose.

**Examples of system monitoring:**

**Enlighten monitoring software** by Enphase provides detailed, real-time system monitoring and reporting. Specific monitoring data is reported for each panel. The entire history of your system’s production is stored, and the graph view shows daily data, including dips from passing clouds!



Curb Appeal	SunSource	Bid 2	Bid 3
Are all-black solar panels an option?	Yes		
What color is the rack and railing system?	Black		
Does the company run conduit in the attic or across the roof?	Concealed when possible		
Is the railing system low-profile? (If rooftop)	Yes		
Have you looked at photos of the vendor’s system installations?			

**Why it matters:**

Your solar installation should look great! Check the website or ask to see photos of installations. Black railings often blend better with roof surfaces, and running conduit inside the attic rather than across visible roof spaces makes a cleaner installation. Plus, if panels are installed on the front of your house, the aesthetics of the solar panels may factor into your equipment choice as well.



**THE BOTTOM LINE:**

With a long-term investment like solar, you want to make sure the equipment will be reliable for decades, and that you won’t encounter unexpected costs down the line.

SunSource works hard to be your #1 partner in solar by providing you the best equipment, service, savings and value for your money. If you’d like to speak with a solar consultant to help you evaluate your solar purchase and compare bids, we’d be happy to give you our honest opinion.

*Information provided by:*



[www.SunSourceHomes.com](http://www.SunSourceHomes.com)