



Data Share vs. Reciprocal Access

What's the Difference?

You will hear the terms “data share” and “reciprocal access” frequently in the real estate industry. An MLS might have a “data share” with another MLS, or you might get “reciprocal access” into an MLS other than one to which you subscribe. But what do these terms mean exactly?

Data Share

A data share is an agreement between MLSs wherein two MLS systems exchange listing data between them. If you're a member of MLS A, and MLS A has a data share with MLS B, you can see listings from MLS B and vice versa. Your searches in MLS A will return listings in MLS A and MLS B, and your listings in MLS A will be visible to professionals who use MLS B – even if they don't use MLS A.

Depending on technical details, the two MLSs may send listings back and forth very quickly. In CRMLS's case, our data shares generally update several times an hour. This means you, as an MLS A user, can see changes or new listings in MLS B almost as quickly as professionals in MLS B.

When two MLSs have a data share agreement, they also share Internet Data Exchange (IDX) data. This means that when a consumer goes to a website belonging to a professional from MLS A, they'll be able to search listings not just from MLS A, but also from any other MLSs with which MLS A shares data.

MLSs may also share data in other ways. For example, as a CRMLS user, you'll see listings from our data share partners in our mobile apps (CRMLS, Homesnap, and MLS-Touch) and several of our other core technology products. If you run a search for comparables in Cloud CMA, for instance, you'll find listings from CRMLS and data share partners.

Reciprocal Access

You can think of reciprocal access as “guest access” into another MLS system. In general, reciprocal access is limited – though the limitations vary depending on the systems and the agreements in place. Reciprocal access is usually available to all users or members of an MLS or Association that has an agreement to provide reciprocal access to another MLS or Association.

Reciprocal access has its benefits and downsides. On the one hand, it's better than providing no access at all. Sometimes, MLSs that plan to share data may start with reciprocal access first as a stopgap measure.

However, reciprocal access requires login to a separate system – one you may not be as familiar with as your usual MLS system. Finally, depending on the MLS, reciprocal access often means everyone in one MLS sharing a single login for another MLS. This means your capabilities in the other MLS are necessarily restricted.



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