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## Beginning Your Home Search

Once you've determined that you're ready to buy, it's time to begin thinking about where you want to look. You'll find there are many questions you must answer about the type of house you want to purchase. For example, are you interested in an older home or a new one? How big of a home do you need? Would you like to move closer to certain major roads or freeways? Your REALTOR® can answer many questions about the homes and communities you're considering, and in the meantime, there are myriad resources available for you to begin your research.

### Location Is Everything

Do you want to live in a particular city or neighborhood? If you're a parent, you're probably considering school districts and other child-friendly options like the proximity to parks. If you're relocating to an unfamiliar area, you can contact the city or county government for information about the community. It's a good idea to investigate **crime statistics** per neighborhood when you're narrowing down the areas of your home search.

Or perhaps location is the reason why you're buying in the first place -- to move closer to your work, your spouse's work or your extended family, or to live within a particular school district's zone. As you're probably aware, the location of your home can have a dramatic effect on its price.

### Size Matters

You may have experienced growing pains in your current home, which prompted you to pursue buying a new abode. Or you're entering a self-employed profession and need a home office. Consider all your space requirements before you start searching for a new home. There's no reason to waste time looking at two-bedroom condos when you really need a four-bedroom house.

### Locating Listings

Once you've narrowed down the specifics of your ideal home, where do you find listings? Your REALTOR® has access to thousands of listings in your area through the Multiple Listings Service (MLS). He or she will help you find available homes that meet your criteria. Or, you can start your home search online through the **California Living Network**.

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