

A detailed nautical chart of the Nauset Bay area in Massachusetts, showing depth soundings, navigational aids, and coastal features. The chart is rendered in a light gray tone, serving as a background for the title text.

# DATA DISTRIBUTION GUIDELINES

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(use chart 13237)

# Table of Contents

Broker Reciprocity (BR) & Internet Data Exchange (IDX)	
BR & IDX Defined.....	2
Listing Data Defined.....	2
Virtual Office Website (VOW).....	2
IDX/VOW Access & Rules.....	2
Automated Valuation Model (AVM)	
AVM Defined.....	3
Access & Rules.....	3
Firm Internal Use	
Firm Internal Use Defined.....	4
Access & Rules.....	4
Use of Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Information	
Social Media.....	4
Physical Distribution.....	4
Reproduction of MLS Data.....	5
Access to Data	
Real Estate Transaction Standard (RETS).....	6
Application Program Interface (API).....	6
“In-House” Vendor.....	6
Third-Party Vendor.....	7
Real Estate Standards Organization	
Real Estate Standards Organization (RESO) Defined.....	7
Broker Distribution	
Broker Distribution Defined.....	8
Broker Distribution Options.....	8
Brokerage Feeds.....	8
Frequently Asked Questions.....	10
Summary of Terms.....	11

## **Broker Reciprocity (BR) & Internet Data Exchange (IDX)**

### **BR & IDX Defined**

Broker Reciprocity (BR) - is the Cape Cod & Islands Multiple Listing Service, Inc.'s (CCIMLS) [which includes all subsequent MLS's that CCIMLS owns and operates] Internet Data Exchange (IDX) Program. IDX affords MLS Participants the ability to authorize electronic display and delivery of their listings by other Participants via the following authorized mediums under the Participant's control: websites, mobile apps, and audio devices. This allows companies and their agents/associates to gather and display listing data from the MLS in order to assist clients/consumers in their search for real estate on the Internet.

### **Listing Data Defined**

For the purpose of this document, 'listing data' shall include, but is not limited to, photographs, virtual tours and videos, remarks, pricing information, and other details or information related to the public display of listed property.

### **Virtual Office Website (VOW)**

A Virtual Office Website (VOW) is defined as a Participant's website, or a feature of a Participant's website through which the Participant can provide real estate brokerage services to consumers with whom they have established a broker-consumer relationship.

Participants and Subscribers may obtain a VOW data feed from the MLS in the same manner as IDX access. The governing language pertaining to VOW data feeds may be found in the MLS Rules & Regulations, Article XVII. VOW data feeds may contain private data fields that are available for internal use by an office or company only and may not to be used for public display.

### **IDX/VOW Access & Rules**

The MLS offers various ways for Participants and Subscribers to obtain IDX/VOW services by use of a RETS data feed or API.

To obtain an IDX or VOW data feed, our members may choose to do one of the following:

Partner with one of CCIMLS's existing third-party vendors with access to a data feed (IDX or VOW);

Use the company of their choice, that is willing to agree to a contractual relationship using our Participant Data Access Agreement\* (IDX or VOW);

Take advantage of the free or paid options available from the CCIMLS listing software

provider (IDX Only).

\*Participants and Subscribers looking to obtain a data feed from a company of their choice, including in-house, should have their vendor contact the CCIMLS office.

The MLS Rules & Regulations contains the governing language for the authorization, participation, and the display of data from MLS. The following articles and sections of the rules cover important details regarding the use of a MLS data feed:

Article IV, Section 4.5 Use of the Terms MLS and Multiple Listing Service and Section 4.7 False or Misleading Advertising and Representations; True Picture Standard of Conduct

Article XI Ownership of MLS Compilation and Copyright

Article XII Use of Copyrighted MLS Compilation

Article XIII Use of MLS Information

Article XVI Internet Data Exchange (IDX)

Article XVII Virtual Office Websites (VOWs)

## **Automated Valuation Model (AVM)**

### **AVM Defined**

Automated Valuation Model (AVM): A service that can provide real estate property valuations using mathematical modeling combined with a database. Most AVMs calculate a property's value at a specific point in time by analyzing values of comparable properties.

### **AVM Access and Rules**

A confidential data feed may be obtained for an AVM product or service. Per the MLS Rules & Regulations Article XII, Section 12.3 and as noted below, any data feed provided by the MLS may be used for an AVM product or service.

Pursuant to Article XVI, Section 16.3.8 of the MLS Rules & Regulations, a listing agent at the request of their seller shall have the ability to disallow the use of their listing for AVM purposes. This can be accomplished on the individual listing, upon input, through the Broker Distribution tab.

## **Firm Internal Use**

### **Firm Internal Use Defined**

Firm Internal Use is the language referring to portions of the MLS data relating to a firm's own listings; and any use of those portions of the MLS data relating to listings of Participants other than the firm that exposes MLS data only to firm-related persons and to Subscribers affiliated with the firm.

### **Firm Internal Use Access & Rules**

Participation and access for this data feed, like other data feed types, is to be used only by Participants of the MLS, their Subscribers, and authorized third-party vendors. Any confidential data feeds, including Firm Internal Use, are strictly for purposes that do not include public display of the information contained therein. This type of data feed is available through RETS or an API to third-party vendors or "in-house" companies such as brokerages and offices that are otherwise Participants in the MLS.

Agents who are on a fee waiver may not use any Participant data other than what is provided by their own firm.

## **Use of Multiple Listing Service (MLS) Information**

### **Social Media**

CCIMLS's IDX policy does not automatically give Participants and Subscribers permission to share listings on social media sites that are not their own or without prior consent from the listing broker.

In addition, any postings of listings on social media sites must follow all applicable State and Federal laws and regulations as well as the REALTOR® Code of Ethics. In addition to laws, regulations and the REALTOR® Code of Ethics, there are policies set forth by each private social media company for which you must comply.

The National Association of Realtors® provides a guideline on social media policy which can be found by visiting <https://www.nar.realtor/ae/manage-your-association/association-policy/create-a-social-media-usage-policy>.

### **Physical Distribution**

Participants and Subscribers must maintain control over any listing information, statistical

information, and any information that can be considered a part of the MLS compilation. Physical distribution is covered by the MLS Rules & Regulations, Article XII Section 12.1 “Distribution” which states:

Participants shall, at all times, maintain control over and responsibility for each copy of any MLS compilation leased to them by the MLS, and shall not distribute any such copies to persons other than Subscribers who are affiliated with such Participant as licensees, those individuals who are licensed or certified by an appropriate state regulatory agency to engage in the appraisal of real property, and any other Subscribers as authorized pursuant to the governing documents of the MLS. Use of information developed by or published by an association multiple listing service is strictly limited to the activities authorized under a Participant’s licensure(s) or certification, and unauthorized uses are prohibited. Further, none of the foregoing is intended to convey participation or membership or any right of access to information developed or published by an association multiple listing service where access to such information is prohibited by law.

### **Reproduction of MLS Data**

Reproduction of MLS data from the MLS compilation is covered in Article XII, Section 12.3 of the MLS Rules & Regulations. The purpose of this rule is to guide Participants in taking the correct actions regarding when they can reproduce this data and understand when they cannot. In general, Participants shall not reproduce MLS data except in the limited and defined circumstances summarized below:

Participants may reproduce a reasonable number of reports of property listing data from the MLS compilation for which perspective purchasers may be interested. This policy does not preclude Participants from listing compilation for display, utilization, distribution or reproducing property reports and other compilation data exclusively of their own active listings. Any MLS information that is reproduced or accessed in any form is for the exclusive use of the Participant and those licensees affiliated with the Participant who are authorized to have access to the information. No information may be accessed or given to any unauthorized parties.

### **In addition to the above information, a partial excerpt of 12.3 states that:**

None of the foregoing shall be construed to prevent any individual legitimately in possession of current listing information, sold information, comparables, or statistical information from utilizing such information to support valuations on particular properties for clients and customers. Any MLS content in data feeds available to Participants for real estate brokerage purposes must also be available to Participants for valuation purposes, including automated valuations. MLSs must either permit use of existing data feeds, or create a separate data feed, to satisfy this requirement. MLSs may require execution of a

third-party license agreement where deemed appropriate by the MLS. MLSs may require Participants who will use such data feeds to pay the reasonably estimated costs incurred by the MLS in adding or enhancing its downloading capacity for this purpose. Information deemed confidential may not be used as supporting documentation. Any other use of such information is unauthorized and prohibited by these rules and regulations.

## **Access to Data**

### **Real Estate Transaction Standard (RETS)**

The Real Estate Transaction Standard (RETS) is the framework used to facilitate the exchange of data. An MLS will publish a dictionary of data available through the use of “metadata”. This helps the authorized user understand which fields will be available for their use. The RETS server provides real-time data to the receiving software, which then translates it into a formatted display.

RETS feeds are offered to approved third-party vendors and “in-house” companies for the data feed types previously described in this document. RETS feed access may be requested by use of the Participant Data Access Agreement and with the payment of any fees as set forth and approved by the Board of Directors and which may be amended periodically.

### **Application Program Interface (API)**

Application Program Interface (API) is a data transfer method that eliminates the need to copy listings between servers. API technology creates efficiencies in the collection and use of MLS data by Participants, vendors, and MLSs. API’s allow for faster updates/results, increased security, and ease of use in displaying property information.

API feeds are offered to approved third-party vendors and “in-house” companies for the data feed types previously described in this document. API may be requested by use of the Participant Data Access Agreement and with the payment of any fees as set forth and approved by the Board of Directors and which may be amended periodically. Please note that API access may be offered through various platforms provided by the MLS and those platforms may have additional rules and fees that apply.

### **“In-House” Vendor**

An “In-House” vendor is the data recipient who maintains membership with the CCIMLS and/or one of the subsequent MLS’s that will utilize a data feed themselves without the use of another company. In-house companies shall adhere to the same practices for obtaining a data feed and the same rules and regulations for use and display. There may still be fees

that apply for an in-house vendor as set forth and approved by the Board of Directors and which may be amended periodically.

### **Third-Party Vendor**

A third-party vendor is the data recipient, typically described as a real estate service or technology provider that offers various products and services to agents, offices, or companies that are members of CCIMLS. Third-party vendors must adhere to our MLS Rules & Regulations, the current Participant Data Access Agreement, and any additional rules or policies described within the data feed platforms. A third-party vendor with access to an MLS data feed must only provide services to those approved members from which a Participant Data Access Agreement has been executed. Any CCIMLS member, office, or company that discontinues membership either by going inactive, being suspended, or terminated must stop receiving services provided by a third-party vendor whom is utilizing a data feed on their behalf. Additionally, if a third-party product or service is found to be in violation of the MLS Rules & Regulations, a fine may be imposed as in accordance with the MLS Citation Policy as well as the possible termination of the data feed.

For information regarding the current fees for data access, please contact the CCIMLS office.

## **Real Estate Standards Organization**

### **Real Estate Standards Organization (RESO) defined**

RESO actively develops, adopts and implements open and accepted data standards and processes across all real estate transactions. RESO provides an environment for the development and implementation of data standards and processes that facilitate software innovation, ensures portability, eliminates redundancies and obtains maximum efficiencies for all parties participating in real estate transactions.

RESO has more than 850 active members, including NAR, multiple-listing services, real estate associations, brokerages and industry technology providers.<sup>1</sup>

CCIMLS is a member of the RESO. As the standards are implemented, we work to update information in the MLS to make sure we have the highest level of certification. We focus on reaching their highest certification levels so that our data is accurate and consistent with other RESO certified MLS's. RESO also has defined a Web API standard for which we are also certified so that both our RETS and API data feeds meet their standards and the

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.reso.org/about-us/>



requirements set forth by the National Association of REALTORS®.

RESO field names and enumerations that are approved for certification can be found in their data dictionary: <https://ddwiki.reso.org/display/DDW17>

## **Broker Distribution**

### **Broker Distribution Defined**

Broker Distribution is the transmittal of listings from the MLS compilation to approved publisher sites. The distribution of listings from the MLS compilation is strictly for those who wish to utilize the extended listing exposure and is not a requirement.

### **Broker Distribution Options**

Participants of CCIMLS have the option to choose where their listings are published. They will find these settings within the MLS listing software by visiting the Menu, under Preferences and clicking the link labeled “Broker Distribution”. Additionally, Participants and Subscribers have the ability to manage broker distribution options on a listing-by-listing basis, as directed by their seller, which can be accessed upon listing input within the Broker Distribution tab.

The goal of the CCIMLS is to put the broker in charge by giving them the tools, the knowledge, and control they need when it comes to the distribution of their listings online. CCIMLS accomplishes this by:

Maintaining a broker distribution tool within the MLS listing software that allows brokers, at the firm level and at the individual listing level, to choose where their data is being distributed;

Training brokers on how to manage their distribution;

Helping brokers and agents with potential issues pertaining to the display of their listings online and provide them with an understanding of where the data is being sourced.

Current CCIMLS publishers include Cape Cod Media Group, Boston.com, Realtor.com, Zillow Group (which includes Zillow.com and Trulia.com), Homes.com, and ListHub. ListHub providing listing exposure on more than 80 websites.

### **Brokerage Feeds**

Brokerage feed is the term used for brokerages who have a previously established

relationship with one or more of the publisher partners. These feeds will not be affected by CCIMLS's distribution of listings.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Question: How do I control where my listings are distributed to?

Answer: Participants of the CCIMLS may control their distribution to the various publisher sites by visiting the Broker Distribution link found within the Menu of the MLS listing software.

When adding a listing, the MLS provides a section within the input form for members to pick and choose which publisher sites, if any, the listing shall to be sent to as agreed upon by their seller.

Q: Do my listings appear on IDX sites as well?

A: Section 16.2 of the MLS Rules & Regulations allows all listings to be available in RETS or API data feeds for IDX use, unless the listing agent and their seller chooses to opt-out of this option.

Q: I am a third-party company, and I would like to get the process started for utilizing your data feed, who do I contact?

A: Any company looking to obtain access to our data feed may contact the MLS office at [mlssupport@cciaor.com](mailto:mlssupport@cciaor.com).

Q: I am a member and I would like to become a client of an already established third-party vendor, where do I start?

A: If requested, the MLS will provide a list of vendors that utilize our data feed. Since the MLS is not always able to determine the exact products and services offered by each vendor, it would be the responsibility of the agent to contact those they would like to discuss partnering with. The MLS may maintain a section on their website that shows at least in part, the contact information for a number of existing third-party vendors.

Q: How am I or my office/company given credit when my listings appear online?

A: Article XVI covers IDX rules and specifically section 16.4 and its subsections describe these rules. In short, IDX sites must display the listing agent and listing firm in a reasonably prominent location, color, and typeface. However, minimal displays of listings like thumbnails are exempt from this rule as long as the thumbnail listing links directly to a full listing detail with the appropriate disclosures.

Q: My client does not want their address to be displayed online for privacy concerns, can I

submit a listing to the MLS but withhold the address from the public display?

A: Upon listing input, within the Broker Distribution tab, there is an option that allows you to exclude the address from internet display. By use of this feature, the address will display in the MLS only, but shall be withheld from public display on IDX and publisher websites, given the data source is CCIMLS.

## **Summary of Terms**

**API:** Application Program Interface

**AVM:** Automated Valuation Model

**Broker Distribution:** Options for which a broker may include or exclude listings from display on publisher websites.

**Broker Reciprocity:** The sharing of listings online

**CCIAOR:** Cape Cod & Islands Association of REALTORS®

**CCIMLS:** Cape Cod & Islands Multiple Listing Service, Inc.

**Firm Internal Use:** Data feed provided for confidential back-office use only

**IDX:** Internet Data Exchange

**In-House Vendor:** Data recipient who maintains membership in the CCIMLS and/or one of the subsequent MLS's that will utilize a data feed themselves without the use of another company.

**Listing Data:** Includes but is not limited to details or information related to listed property.

**MLS Rules & Regulations:** The Rules & Regulations of the CCIMLS

**Participant Data Access Agreement:** A data agreement used for data feed requests and authorization

**RESO:** Real Estate Standards Organization

**RETS:** Real Estate Transaction Standard

**Third-Party Vendor:** Data recipient that offers products and services to Participants and Subscribers of CCIMLS.

**VOW:** Virtual Office Web

Questions or Comments? Please e-mail [mlssupport@cciaor.com](mailto:mlssupport@cciaor.com)