



THE ULTIMATE RELOCATION GUIDE



From ***Finding a House***
to ***Feeling at Home*** in the East Bay



YOUR GUIDE TO THE RELOCATION PROCESS

Whether you're moving across town or across the country, relocating to a new area can be both exciting and stressful.

Chances are good that you'll be changing more than your address. Besides a new home, you may also be searching for new jobs, schools, doctors, restaurants, stores, and more. You'll need to pack and make moving arrangements—and possibly sell your old home.

With so much to do, you may be wondering: Where do I start?

This guide can serve as your roadmap, providing essential information and insights to ease your transition and save you time, money, and hassle along the way. Inside you'll find tips to help you choose a community, find your new home, sell your current home, plan your departure, prepare for your arrival, and get settled.

To avoid getting overwhelmed, focus on one step at a time. And don't hesitate to ask for support! We're here as a resource to help make your relocation as pleasant and painless as possible.

~ Nicole Harden

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CHOOSE A COMMUNITY

When planning a relocation, one of the first things you'll need to decide is where you want to live. This could be as broad as an area of town, or you might narrow it down to a specific neighborhood.

You'll want to consider a variety of factors, such as:

- **Proximity to Work** - Map out the commute to your workplace and the availability of public transportation, if you plan to use it.
- **Amenities** - Make a list of essential amenities you'd like nearby such as grocery stores, gyms, restaurants, and parks.
- **Neighborhood Vibe** - Visit the area to gauge its atmosphere and characteristics, such as walkability, retail offerings, and population density.
- **Cost of Living** - Evaluate property prices, rent, utility costs, and overall affordability of different neighborhoods to match your financial situation and needs.
- **Schools** - If you have children or plan to in the future, consider the public schools they would be zoned to attend or the proximity to your preferred private schools.
- **Safety** - Look up local crime statistics and evaluate safety measures, like street lighting and speed bumps.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

Researching the ins and outs of various neighborhoods can be time-consuming and sometimes difficult. For a local's inside look into the top communities in the East Bay, check out our Neighborhood Profile Pages.

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NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES

Whether you're completely new to the area or a local considering a move within the East Bay, we've got you covered! Below, you'll find some high-level insights into a few of the most sought-after neighborhoods in our market. Each of these communities offers unique amenities and characteristics, making them top choices for residents and newcomers alike.



Concord, CA

General Location: Located in the San Francisco Bay Area, northeast of San Francisco.

Popular Attractions: Todos Santos Plaza, Newhall Community Park, Port Chicago Naval Magazine National Memorial

School Districts: Mt. Diablo Unified

Average Home Price: \$795,912

125,769 people live in Concord, where the median age is 38.5 and the average individual income is \$43,888. Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.



Vallejo, CA

General Location: Located in the San Francisco Bay Area, north of San Francisco. approximately 30 miles north of San Francisco.

Popular Attractions: Mare Island Museum, Vallejo Farmers Market, San Francisco Bay Ferry Vallejo Service

School Districts: Vallejo Unified School District

Average Home Price: \$552,286

125,350 people live in Vallejo, where the median age is 39.8 and the average individual income is \$36,695. Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

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NEIGHBORHOOD PROFILES



Antioch, CA

General Location: Located in Contra Costa County, northeast of Concord and about 45 miles northeast of San Francisco.

Popular Attractions: Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve, Contra Loma Regional Park, El Campanil Theatre

School Districts: Antioch Unified School District

Average Home Price: \$630,282

114,750 people live in Antioch, where the median age is 37 and the average individual income is \$33,379. Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.



Pittsburg, CA

General Location: Pittsburg, CA is located in Contra Costa County, northeast of Concord and about 40 miles northeast of San Francisco.

Popular Attractions: Small World Park, California Theatre, Pittsburg Historical Museum

School Districts: Pittsburg Unified School District

Average Home Price: \$600,818

75,701 people live in Pittsburg, where the median age is 35.1 and the average individual income is \$32,796. Data provided by the U.S. Census Bureau.

[Explore More Neighborhood](#)

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FIND YOUR NEW HOME

Once you've determined your ideal location, it's time to start thinking about your new home. For many of our clients, this is the most exhilarating part of their move! A new home signifies a fresh start and exciting possibilities.

The first decision you'll need to make is whether you want to rent or buy a home. Each option offers some distinct advantages.

REASONS TO RENT

Renting can be a good option when you're new to an area, especially if you're still saving up for a downpayment or you're not ready to commit to a permanent location. Benefits include:


- **Greater Flexibility**
When you rent, it's easier to adapt to lifestyle changes or try out different locations.
- **Less Maintenance**
Typically, renters are not responsible for repairs or home maintenance projects, which can cost time and money.
- **Lower Upfront Costs**
The initial financial outlay for renting is usually lower than buying.

INSTANT MARKET UPDATES

Want to see what's available before you decide? Stay on the pulse of the housing inventory in the East Bay with notifications whenever homes hit the market, change price, or go under contract with our Instant Market Updates. Ask us for more info!

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FIND YOUR NEW HOME

REASONS TO BUY

But, if you want to avoid multiple moves—and you're financially able—there's no reason to delay the benefits of homeownership, which include:



Quality of Life

Research by the National Association of REALTORS® suggests that homeownership correlates to increased health and happiness, greater educational achievement, and a higher degree of civil engagement.*



Financial Health

Buying a home is one of the best ways to protect and grow your wealth. Real estate will typically ride out a market's ups and downs and appreciate with time. You'll also build equity as you pay down your mortgage.



Stability

Rental prices over the last 10 years in the U.S. have increased by over 42%.** In contrast, your fixed-rate mortgage payments on your home won't rise at all.



Tax Deductions

Homeowners receive tax deductions for mortgage interest and property taxes, which are both deductible on an individual's federal income tax return.



Independence

The freedom to do whatever they wish with their homes is a big incentive for many new homeowners, while others can't wait to get out from under the thumb of their landlord.

*NAR, The Benefits of Homeownership

**Statistica, Monthly median asking rent for unfurnished apartments in the United States from 1980 to 2023



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THE HOME BUYING PROCESS

If you decide to purchase a home and you choose us to represent you, you can rest easy knowing that we will be there for you throughout the entire journey, working hard to make the experience as easy and enjoyable as possible. Or, if you're moving to a new area, we can refer you to a local agent in our network who shares our commitment to client service.

While every real estate transaction is different, here are the basic steps you can expect to undertake when you buy a home:



HOME BUYER'S GUIDE

For more information about the ins and outs of the home buying process, reach out to request a free copy of our *Home Buyer's Guide*.

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SELL YOUR CURRENT HOME

If you already own a home, you'll also need to start the process of either selling it or renting it out. But selling your home when you still need to shop for a new one can feel daunting to even the most seasoned homeowner.

Here are some of the most frequent concerns we hear from clients who are trying to buy and sell at the same time, plus some of our expert tips for handling them:

“WHAT WILL I DO IF I SELL MY HOUSE BEFORE I CAN BUY A NEW ONE?”

Open your mind to short-term housing options.

Check out furnished apartments, vacation rentals, and month-to-month leases. You may even find that a short-term rental arrangement can offer you an opportunity to get to know your new neighborhood better.

“WHAT IF I GET STUCK WITH TWO MORTGAGES AT THE SAME TIME?”

Ask us about contingencies that can be included in your contracts.

For example, it's possible to add a contingency to your purchase offer that lets you cancel the contract if you haven't sold your previous home. We can discuss the pros and cons of these types of tactics and what's realistic given the current market dynamics.

“WHAT IF I MESS UP MY TIMING OR BURN OUT FROM ALL THE STRESS?”

Enlist help early.

It's our job to guide you and advocate on your behalf. So don't be afraid to lean on us throughout the process. We're here to ease your burden and make your move as seamless and stress-free as possible.

We can help you evaluate your options based on current market conditions. We'll also give you an idea of how much equity you have in your current home so you know how much you can afford to spend on your new one.

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THE HOME SELLING PROCESS

If you do decide to list your home, we can also help you successfully navigate the sales process. Or, if your property is outside of our service area, we can refer you to a trusted real estate professional in your current market for help.

While every real estate transaction is different, here are the basic steps you can expect to undertake when you sell a home:

STEP 1 - Hire a Real Estate Agent

Choose a pro who knows how to list, market, and sell your home.

STEP 3 - Preparation

Get the home ready for staging, photography, and showing.

STEP 5 - Showings

Buyers will tour the home, ask questions, and determine if your home is the right fit for them.

STEP 7 - Manage Closing

Work with the buyer's agent, lawyers, and title to finish the sale.

STEP 2 - Access Home Value

Use market knowledge and prices of competing homes to set the list price.

STEP 4 - Marketing

Start marketing the home using a thorough property marketing plan.

STEP 6 - Negotiate Offers

Evaluate offers on your home and negotiate to get the best one based on your criteria.

HOME SELLER'S GUIDE

For a more complete overview of the home selling process, reach out to request a free copy of our *Home Seller's Guide*.

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3 PS OF SELLING A HOME

While many real estate agents follow a similar home selling process, our comprehensive marketing strategy is what sets us apart. With it, we can attract multiple offers on your home, which allows you to choose the one that has the best price, the best timeline, and the best conditions for your specific circumstances.

We utilize a proven strategy that's designed to achieve an efficient sale while maximizing your profits. At the core of our approach is a powerful trifecta called the "3 Ps":



PRICING

As local market experts, we know what buyers are willing to pay for a home like yours. We combine this knowledge with a variety of factors—including comparable sales data and the unique features of your home—to determine your ideal listing price.



PREPARATION

In order to get the most money possible for your home, it's crucial to prepare it properly before we put it on the market. Quality preparation helps your home make the best impression on buyers, and it may include activities like making repairs, cleaning, decluttering, and staging.



PROPERTY MARKETING

We employ a strategic, multi-step marketing plan that utilizes the latest tools and technology to seed the marketplace, optimize for Search Engine Optimization (SEO), and position your home for the best possible impression right out of the gate.

PROPERTY MARKETING PLAN

We employ the latest technologies and tactics to attract the best possible offers on your home. For a full list of our strategies, request a copy of our Property Marketing Plan.



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PLAN YOUR DEPARTURE

Preparing for a move can be both exhilarating and exhausting. Fortunately, you don't have to do everything in a day. You don't have to do it all alone, either. When you work with us, we'll be there every step of the way to help you navigate this process with ease.

To that end, here are some of our top tips to help you plan for your departure.

- **Prepare Your Children**

Moving can be especially difficult for our youngest family members. If you have children, communicate the move in an age-appropriate way. If possible, take them on a tour of your new home and neighborhood. This can alleviate some of the mystery and apprehension around the move.

- **Decide What to Take**

Use this opportunity to declutter your belongings by sorting items into categories: keep, donate, sell, or discard. This will not only streamline your packing process but also help you start fresh in your new home with only the items you truly need and love.

- **Start Packing**

To maintain order and make unpacking easier, pack one room at a time. Clearly label each box with its contents and the room it belongs to. This will save you time and effort when unpacking in your new home.

1. Plan to Move Your Belongings

If you will be using a moving company, start researching and pricing your options. Make sure you're working with a reputable company, and try to avoid paying a large deposit before your belongings are delivered.

- **Transfer Schools**

Let your child's current school or daycare know you'll be moving and ask for any necessary forms. Arrange to have all records transferred to their new district.

PLAN YOUR DEPARTURE

- **Turn Off Utilities**

Once you know your moving date, you can arrange to have your utilities turned off or, if possible, transferred into the new homeowner's name.

- **Arrange for Transportation**

If you plan to drive to your new home, map out the route, and, if necessary, make arrangements for overnight accommodations along the way. If driving is not a good option, you may need to have your vehicles transported and make travel arrangements for you, your family, and your pets.

- **Schedule Final Get-Togethers**

If you will be leaving friends or family behind, schedule final get-togethers before your departure. The last days before moving can be incredibly hectic, so make sure you block off some time in advance for proper goodbyes.

- **Prep Your Home for New Owners**

If you're selling your home, don't forget that you'll need to leave it clean and ready for the new owners. After your belongings have been removed, you'll need to set aside time to clean it yourself or have it professionally done. Also, be sure to leave behind any keys, garage door openers, warranty documents, etc. We can help you determine what should (and shouldn't) be left for the new owners.

LET US CONNECT YOU

We know the best moving companies, packing services, and housekeepers in the East Bay area to help you make your move easier. Ask us about our Trusted Partner Program so we can ensure you get the VIP treatment.

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PREPARE FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

While it's tempting to get wrapped up in the departure details, don't forget to plan ahead for your arrival at your new home. To make your transition go smoothly, you should start preparing well before moving day.

Here are a few pro tips to help you get started:

- **Label Your Essentials**

You'll need a few items (think toothbrush, towels, bedsheets) to make it through the first night in your new home. Designate some boxes with "Open Me First!" labels. (Pro tip: Keep a tool kit front and center for all that reassembling.)

- **Turn On Utilities**

Arrange in advance for your utilities to be turned on, especially essentials like water, electricity, and gas. You may also want to schedule Internet and cable service in advance.

- **Update Your Address**

Notify any relevant parties—banks, credit cards, subscriptions, etc.—about your change of address so you don't miss any important bills, notices, or deliveries. You'll also want to notify the post office and submit a mail forwarding request.

- **Enroll in School**

If you have children, ask about the process to register them for school. If possible, schedule a tour so they can see their campus and meet their new teachers in advance.

- **Prep Your New Home**

You may want to have the house professionally cleaned before moving in. And if you plan to remodel, paint, or install new flooring, it's easier to have it done before you bring in all of your belongings.

PREPARE FOR YOUR ARRIVAL

- **Consider Transportation**

If you own a car, check the requirements for a driver's license and vehicle registration in your new area and contact your insurance company to update your policy. If you will utilize public transportation, research options and schedules.

- **Research Your New "Go To" Spots**

Create a list of all the restaurants you want to try and places you want to visit around your newly purchased home. Having a to-explore list keeps everyone's spirits high and gives you starting points to settle into the neighborhood.

Use the worksheet below to start brainstorming:

| Food / Dining | |
|--------------------------|--|
| Restaurants | |
| Bars & Cafes | |
| Shopping / Entertainment | |
| Shopping Centers | |
| Markets & Fairs | |
| Culture / Education | |
| Museums & Art Galleries | |
| Theaters | |
| Outdoor / Recreation | |
| Parks & Green Spaces | |
| Local Landmarks | |

GET SETTLED

Studies show that moving can lead to feelings of loneliness and depression.* However, there are ways to combat these negative effects.

Here are a few strategies to help you and your family get settled in the new space:

- **Prioritize Your Kids**

If you have children, unpack their rooms first. Seeing familiar items will help ease their transition and establish a “safe zone” where they can hang out away from the chaos. If possible, let them have a say in how their room is set up.

- **Make a Plan for Pets**

Pets can also get overwhelmed by a new, unfamiliar space. Let them adjust to a single room first, which should include their favorite toys, treats, food and water bowl, and a litter box for cats. Once they seem comfortable, you can gradually introduce them to other rooms in the home.

- **Get Organized**

As you unpack, make a list of items that need to be purchased so you’re not making multiple trips to the store. Also, start a list of needed repairs and installations. If you have a home warranty, find out what’s covered and the process for filing a service order.

- **Explore Your New Neighborhood**

Try to schedule breaks to get out of your house and investigate your new area. And if you travel by foot or bicycle, you’ll gain the mood-boosting advantages of fresh air and exercise.


- **Get Plugged In**

Combat feelings of isolation by making an effort to meet people in your new community. Find a local interest group, take a class, join a place of worship, or volunteer for a cause. Don’t wait for friends to come knocking on your door. Instead, go out and find them.

*Psychology Today, Why You’re Miserable After a Move

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NEXT STEPS

We specialize in assisting home buyers and sellers with a seamless and “less-stress” relocation. Along with our referral network of moving companies, contractors, cleaning services, interior designers, and other home service providers, we can help take the hassle and headache out of your upcoming move.

We are home sales experts in East Bay, and we are confident in our ability to give you a positive relocation experience. But don't just take our word for it! Here's what some of our past clients have said about their experience working with us:



You can see these and even more reviews on [Google](#) and [Zillow](#).

So if you are considering moving in the East Bay, we invite you to reach out to us at the contact information below. We would love the opportunity to learn more about your specific situation and start your relocation journey.

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ABOUT ME

For Nicole Harden, buying her first home was an inspiration — but the experience was less than ideal. She resolved to be everything her first real estate agent was not: transparent, honest, and keeping her clients as the most important part of the process.

A longtime area resident, Nicole has lived in almost every city of the East Bay. Prior to real estate, she studied computer applications, worked for PG&E, and was an administrative associate at an architecture and engineering firm for 15 years. Along the way, she honed skills that serve her well as a real estate professional: communication, time management, event planning, team-building, and the ability to understand and connect with a diverse range of people.

In the constantly evolving, data-driven world of real estate, Nicole wants to be a reliable source of information for her clients. She likes working with first-time buyers, sellers, seniors, and millennials. She is especially passionate about supporting young mothers. Thankful for the help of her own family and friends, and realizing not everyone is as fortunate, she wants to guide and assist single mothers who are interested in becoming homeowners and building wealth and stability for the sake of their children — in her words, our future.

In her spare time, Nicole enjoys spiritual pursuits such as meditating and crystal collecting, traveling, and spending time outdoors doing everything from snow activities to snorkeling. She and her husband are empty nesters and enjoy spending time with their adult son as well as discovering new activities and hobbies to enjoy.

MORE RESOURCES

Click the links below for more information.

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