



relocation in a changing world:

9 strategies for addressing relocating employee concerns amid a pandemic

The global COVID-19 pandemic has forced us into a new way of life. Wearing a mask, keeping a distance and washing hands regularly has become second nature. As we've learned to adjust our everyday lives, global mobility teams have adapted effective techniques for managing the common challenges relocating employees face.

We surveyed over 300 relocating employees between May and June of 2020 and interviewed a focus group to better understand their perspective of moving during the pandemic. From their feedback as well as our own industry experience, we've outlined the top strategies mobility teams can use to ease the most common pandemic-related concerns.

1

Communicate proactively to help relocating employees feel in control. Sharing considerations and timetables, even if preliminary, will help employees feel comfortable about the relocation process.

2

Establish regular virtual office hours for employees to engage with the mobility team. This is a reliable way to open a line for two-way communication and answer questions.

3

Share information about the office location and environment in case employees are unable to see it before moving. Photos, videos and details about the workspace, city and popular housing options will create excitement about the move.

4

Reconsider your payback agreement process. Employees may feel uncertain about accepting a relocation and could be hesitant to sign multi-year agreements when many companies are scaling back their operations.

5

Extend relocation timeframes. The relocation process may take longer than normal for many employees and their families to complete, and providing extra time to use benefits will go a long way for their peace of mind.

63%

of relocating employees have had their relocation timelines disrupted by COVID-19.* This makes it critical for mobility teams to provide proactive support throughout the process.

*Plus Relocation relocating employee survey, May-June 2020

6

Begin immigration paperwork as soon as a need is identified. Shifts in eligibility requirements and available resources have stretched the processing time for immigration applications.

7

Allow employees to begin their jobs in a virtual setting, but be sure to understand the tax liability. Employees working virtually from a state different than that of their new office may be subject to different taxes. You may be able to make a case for apportionment.

8

Check in with new employees who have relocated but are working virtually and introduce them to other coworkers. Introductions and icebreakers will make employees feel welcomed and connected to their new community.

9

Approve exceptions quickly, which will alleviate stress when policies fall short of meeting needs. Exceptions related to the pandemic might even be considered tax excludable.

This pandemic has presented unprecedented challenges to mobility professionals, and staying on top of the latest developments requires near-constant attention. Following these nine strategies can help you set a course through turbulent times.

Check out [“Mobility in the Time of COVID-19: Lessons From the Relocating Employee Experience Amid a Pandemic”](#) for more.


