



## the DE&I toolbox:

*how to offer all relocating employees the resources and support they need*

When your mobility team sends an employee on an international assignment, or asks someone to relocate to a different part of the country, you're really asking this person — and their family, in many cases — a bigger question: Can you assimilate seamlessly into a new environment and possibly a new culture?

Sometimes, that change might not be very extreme — an employee moving a state or two away often won't have too hard of a time settling in. However, this adjustment can also be incredibly drastic, such as when someone goes on a long-term assignment in a location with a completely different language and belief system.

Modern mobility programs should be built with diversity, equity and inclusion (DE&I) in mind, and a key piece of this puzzle is ensuring that employees of *all* backgrounds, beliefs and statuses are:

- considered for relocations or assignments in the first place
- comfortable with these opportunities when they arise
- set up for success in adjusting to a new location and culture

Makes sense, right? But how do you get there? You can start by building a “DE&I toolbox,” or a set of practices and resources that can help employees adapt to new cultures and support your team's broader DE&I mission.

### Track your mobility metrics so you can make smart, data-driven decisions

Nearly 90% of mobility leaders say they are concerned about finding suitable candidates for international assignments, but only [6% actively encourage mobility within minority or underrepresented groups](#). Your relocating employee population should reflect the demographics of your entire company, but without reliable data, it's impossible to know if you're on target or need to do more with underrepresented groups.



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\*Deloitte, “Inclusive Mobility: How Mobilizing a Diverse Workforce Can Drive Business Performance,” 2018

If you're not tracking this kind of data within your program, now is a good time to start. Once you have reliable metrics, you'll begin to see where you need to focus your efforts to increase diversity and representation. Does your relocation population actually reflect the demographics of your company? Of your community? If not, why do you think that is? At the same time, you can [take a closer look at your policy language](#) and consider how it could be updated to be more inclusive.

### Stay up to date on cultural barriers

The world is a complex place, and this complexity is apparent when looking at different cultural norms and attitudes. There are *a lot* of different behaviors and beliefs practiced across the globe — and they can all impact relocating employees in different ways depending on their unique circumstances.

For example, [attitudes toward same-sex couples vary drastically from country to country](#). While opposite-sex couples may not be largely impacted by a move between countries, their LGBTQ peers would likely have a different experience.

Unfortunately, a little under two-thirds of employers “are [unaware of LGBT social and legal conditions](#) in countries of operation.” While these organizations may have every intention of offering mobility opportunities to a diverse mix of employees, this lack of awareness creates a blind spot in the support they are able to offer their LGBTQ candidates — and could ultimately push these candidates away from relocation entirely.

This is just one example, but the same idea extends to a number of demographic groups, all of which can face different barriers depending on their specific circumstances. It's a lot for a mobility team to keep track of, which leads to the next point.

### Build your network of experts outside of mobility

Mobility leaders are sharp, but we can't know everything! That's OK! The important thing is to make an effort to reach out to people who do have some answers, to hopefully avoid having blind spots like the example in the previous section.

So who are these people? Depending on your company's structure, they could very well come from within the organization. More and more companies are [hiring for specific DE&I-related roles](#), and these internal resources can be a great help in identifying potential blind spots in your program. What's even more encouraging is that corporate DE&I leaders are starting to “[outgrow](#)” HR and want to [expand their scope](#). If there was ever a time to build some cross-departmental relationships, now would be it.

If those resources don't exist internally, consider people in your professional network who may be able to help, or start expanding your circle by connecting with outside experts, such as researchers and educators. The key is that you're willing to move beyond just talk and actually [take specific steps toward supporting DE&I goals](#).

### Offer cultural training that hits the mark

In the larger scheme of relocations and assignments, cultural training is often an “extra” — something that is occasionally added on top of more traditional mobility benefits, such as household goods shipping, but isn't always offered. And “extras” are often what get trimmed when mobility teams are forced to cut costs, which has been a reality amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, cultural training isn't an “extra” if you're looking to truly establish a mobility program committed to DE&I across the globe.



*If your mobility team doesn't have all the DE&I answers, that's OK — but it's a good idea to consult with those who do*

These sessions are vital for helping employees understand and get comfortable with a relocation or assignment opportunity. This is particularly true for employees whose backgrounds might make them hesitant to move to a certain location, such as an employee with a medical condition that requires specialized accommodations or someone of a faith background that might not be as welcome in the destination location.

It's critical that the cultural training you offer your employees is detailed and useful, and you can work with a relocation management company (RMC) to help identify different options available in the marketplace.

Additionally, we're [likely to see more business-focused trainings and global leadership programs emerge in the coming years](#). These types of sessions go beyond the standard model of cultural training — where a relocating employee simply learns about the location he or she is moving to — and bring in a wider mix of people from within a company, including mobility team members and other business leaders.

This is a great approach because it helps build cultural competency not just for the relocating employee but within the broader organization — and that's a big step toward becoming a more inclusive and supportive company for *all* employees.

The time is now for DE&I in mobility. [We surveyed industry leaders to identify insights, goals and strategies for the future.](#)

