Job Relocation

It is an exciting prospect to live and work in a new location, whether in your home country or abroad. Meeting local expectations for resumes, background experience, language skills, and knowledge of the geographical region is a way to let potential employers know that you are fully engaged in the prospect of living and working in the area and completely prepared to contribute to their work.

It is also important to identify and reflect on the reasons why you want to work in the new location. Workers are extremely mobile in the 21st century marketplace; it is not unusual to seek experience anywhere in the world. Let the potential employer know why this is a great next step for you and your related experience that you bring. You might note, for example, the region’s dynamic potential in your field; the opportunity to contribute your skills and grow professionally by working in the new environment; language skills and cross-cultural understanding that position you as a strong candidate.

8 Steps to a Successful Job Relocation

If you want to have a successful transition, here’s what you’ll need to do:

Stay organized. Much of moving related stress comes from managing all of the logistics, like leaving your current home, and finding a new one, Terry says. "Try to be very organized. Keep to-do lists for both your departure and arrival locations so that you can stay on top of everything."

Know what’s available to you. Many companies offer a variety of relocation services and most are flexible in what they provide, Kahn says. Make sure you take the time to learn what’s available to you—and use it. For example, some companies will pay for things like house hunting trips, transportation of your cars, assistance in selling or buying your home, help figuring out how to rent out a property, and event organizers to settle you into your new home. They might also be able to help your spouse with job placement or employment leads in your new city, Stimpson adds.

If your employer doesn’t typically offer relocation assistance, ask for it. If you learn that assistance isn’t typically given, don’t be afraid to negotiate, Stimpson says. Start by researching moving costs (truck rentals, quotes from professional movers, transportation expenses, temporary housing, storage, etc.) so that you can present your employer with a detailed estimate of how much your relocation is expected to cost you. "Having this supporting information is crucial to the success of your request," he says. Also ask about preferred providers when it comes to relocation companies and real estate agents. Reimbursement for your relocation may be contingent upon the usage of designated professionals with whom your employer has established relationships.

Take time to get to know your new environment before you move. If you have the luxury of taking some time to explore your new area before arriving, do so, Terry says. "Explore the neighborhoods in the area to make sure that you find the best suited one for your lifestyle," she says. If you’re not able to visit the new city before you move, take the time talk to people that live there or used to live there, and "get as much perspective
as you can on what you’re walking into,” Kahn says. You should also read the local news or any local blogs to understand the vibe and learn what’s going in your new town, Terry adds.

**Know the cost of living in the new city.** There are significant differences in cost of living among US cities and states, Stimpson says. "Typically, these differences will be compensated for in your salary, but it’s still important to check.” Do the research and plan accordingly.

**Don’t make any long-term commitments.** "Renting at first is a great way to settle into a new city without making a commitment to a neighborhood you might end up not liking," Terry says. Kahn agrees. He says a common mistake many people make when relocating for a job is to buy a home or commit to a long-term lease immediately, and later find that they don’t like the neighborhood, or the job.

Stimpson says to ask about temporary corporate housing. "Some companies offer apartments or condos for a fixed length of time to allow relocating employees to familiarize themselves with their new surroundings and make an informed housing decision."

**Find out if any of your moving expenses are tax-deductible.** Even if your new employer doesn’t offer any financial assistance for your relocation, you might be eligible for partial reimbursement come tax time, which can definitely ease some of your financial stress, Stimpson says. (See IRS Tax Topic 455 for details on which expenses qualify.) "Generally, the moving tax deductions requirements are: the move must be because you started a new job; your new home must be at least 50 miles from your old home and your old job. (This is to prevent folks from simply moving across the street every time they changed jobs in a design to take advantage of the moving tax deduction.); and you must work full time for at least 39 weeks during the last 52 following your move. Self-employed movers need to work at least 78 weeks over the last 2 years to qualify."

**Build a social support network.** "Use your friends to network to make new friends in the same way that you would try to network for a job,” Kahn says. Use online services like MeetUp to find others in the area that have similar interests or hobbies. Your new company may also offer clubs and interest groups to meet new people. The faster you can build a support network, the more at home you will feel and the happier you will be with your decision to move, he says.

"Establishing a social network in your new town is going to make you feel more grounded and happy, which will allow you to perform better in your new job," Terry adds.