

# Modern Families



## The Issue

As organizations aim to expand their talent pools, diversity and inclusion are critical considerations. Multinational corporations and an increased emphasis upon corporate responsibility drive the need to ensure fair, equitable and respectful treatment of employees.

But companies are hesitant to ask sensitive questions, restricting the collection data needed to address key issues and roadblocks. Even though it's legally permissible and necessary to address these critical matters, this hesitation holds them back.



## The Mobility Impact

While many companies enthusiastically adopt the concept of inclusiveness when evaluating candidates for assignments -- and genuinely strive to make opportunities accessible to all qualified individuals -- relocating employees are still governed by the laws, cultural norms, infrastructure, and other available support in the host country.

For instance, in countries where LGBT status is not acknowledged or is illegal, corporations struggle to maintain their commitment to diversity and inclusion when offering international assignments. Additionally, some couples may opt not to marry, and common-law partnerships might not be recognized for immigration purposes.

The "traditional" household structure of a single earner with a stay-at-home parent is becoming rare, and dual-income households require different mobility assistance. In other cases, expatriate employees may seek maternity or parental leave or adopt children in the host countries. Or a spouse with a significant career might be unwilling to relocate if they cannot work in the new country.

Addressing these scenarios and supporting **all** types of families is key to cultivating an inclusive mobility program.

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## Our Recommendations

One approach to developing a relocation policy is to provide the same support on all assignments without requiring employees to disclose personal information to receive additional benefits. Since all unaccompanied assignments are weighed equitably, the company would not provide exceptions or extra support. In essence, one situation is not viewed as requiring more significant assistance than another.

While there is a distinction in the type of support provided for accompanied vs. unaccompanied assignments, it is still up to the employee to decide whether the support will meet the family's needs and whether they choose to accept or decline the position. No exceptions to policy are necessary if families are educated on the policy before accepting the assignment.



## Why Relocations Are Declined

Family issues or ties and lack of spousal or partner assistance are two of the top three reasons an employee declines a relocation.



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## The Client Impact

Forward-thinking companies could adopt the philosophy that the family can adequately self-assess their suitability for an assignment. When they accept the assignment, they also receive the level of support they can expect. For example, a company could provide medical testing and cultural training for the entire family. The results are then included in a suitability assessment of their location.

Understanding the limitations and challenges of the region, if they still decide to accept the assignment, they know that extra support will not be provided outside of what is defined and proscribed in the policy.



## The Bottom Line

Removing obstacles to assignments through accommodations is a delicate balancing act: addressing and respecting the laws of the host country, weighing the impacts of precedent-setting, evaluating facilities and infrastructures, determining and establishing business practices and norms, and setting standards of both the home and host countries.

Determining best practices for your company requires a multifaceted approach executed through an increasingly wider-angled lens.

But the rewards of putting in this work are well worth the effort, underscoring your reputation as an employer of choice and ensuring that all mobile families are set up for success.

*Weichert Workforce Mobility has prepared this information from the most current data available. However, the client is advised to consult with their own tax and legal counsel with regard to any interpretation of IRS regulations or subsequent changes in policy.*

References:

Atlas Van Lines 2024 Corporate Relocation Survey  
Weichert Workforce Mobility Research