

CANADIAN RELOCATION SYSTEMS, "MOVING TIMES" APRIL 2005

RELOCATION BY YOUR COMPANY

Sooner or later, many of you will take a job that requires you to move yourself and your family. You will likely incur significant expenses in the process, and, if you are like most people, you will want your employer to pay for at least some of them. The following advice should help you handle this negotiation as effectively and collaboratively as possible.

1: Focus on Your Interests

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- * assistance in selecting and paying for childcare.
- * a higher cost-of-living subsidy.
- * a higher mortgage cost allowance.
- * a bridge loan because you cannot sell your house before relocating.
- * assistance in choosing a good local school for your children.

Once you have thought about what help you need, you can prepare to negotiate for a package that suits your unique needs.

2: Find Out What Assistance Is Typical

Your preparation for this negotiation should include the following:

Ask your new employer's HR department if the company has a written relocation policy, or if it offers standard benefits.

Find out who has recently moved at the company and ask them what relocation packages they got. Ask your friends or other contacts in similar firms about their experiences or their companies' policies. If you are using a recruiter, he or she should be able to provide guidance as well. Keep in mind that companies tend to vary in what they offer, and larger companies have more standardized policies. Therefore, compensation can differ by industry, by city and even by position in the company (executives tend to get more). Nonetheless, the following expenses are commonly covered:

- * Moving costs
- * Temporary lodging costs
- * Travel costs back home if you relocate before your family moves
- * Assistance for a spouse who has to find a new job (may include job search reimbursements, referrals to a recruiter and arranging for interviews inside the company)
- * Assistance in selling your house.

3: Develop Ideas that Benefit Both Sides

No matter what is standard, many companies are willing to negotiate packages that address the distinct needs of their new employees. Still, even though everything is negotiable, your employer is more likely to agree to your ideas if they benefit the company as well. So anticipate this reality, and provide the advantages for them when you share your ideas. For example, an employee made sure to tell his/her new company, "I will be able to work longer hours, and be more productive from the start if I can get a few important matters settled quickly."

An employer who, while willing to provide extra assistance for relocation, did not want to set a precedent of deviating from its written policy. This person solved the problem by saying, "Well, what if we agree that this assistance will be called a signing bonus?"

4: Get It in Writing

Once you and the company agree on a compensation package for your relocation expenses, make sure you capture that agreement in writing. A formal contract is not necessary, just a simple signed letter explaining what assistance is being provided by what time.

A negotiation about relocation compensation is the same as any other negotiation. If you focus instead on effective preparation, collaborative negotiating and out-of-the-box thinking, you will do well.

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