

Supporting Your Mobile Workforce Through the Current Pandemic

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As global employers look to support their mobile workforce through the current pandemic, the summary below breaks down strategic considerations for employers across different timeframes. It also provides ideas with respect to mobility programs to help with business continuity and achieving long-term mobility goals.

Short-Term Strategies

Under 6 months



Review gaps and develop mitigation strategies

Review policy exclusions for pandemics, disability and workers compensation coverage, waiting periods for repatriated assignees, and gaps for furloughed employees including both retirement and salary-based risk policies.



Revisit assignment leave benefits to support employees and families

Repurpose or redesign paid family leave and sick leave to accommodate unique needs, such as isolation away from the home, caring for family members, and extended leave for separated families.



Consider additional benefits for stranded assignees

Evaluate provisions, such as on-line EAP and counseling services for employees and families whose mental health and anxiety may be affected, or financial wellness on-line support for those with financial concerns.



Manage exceptions by using temporary addendums to assignment letters

Consider covering short-term benefits, allowances, and one-time payments. Examples such as internet allowances, parental schooling, and home travel allowances have been adopted.



Plan for gradual returns and re-assignments

Sending employees and families to their home country, or to more effective working geographies for the short-term. Travel restrictions and quarantine requirements should be accounted for. This may entail separate accommodations for the returning assignee if on a single assignment.



Plan for contingencies when transferring or repatriating employees

Extended temporary living arrangements, disrupted supply chain to transport home goods, 90-day prescription supply due to quarantines, etc.

Medium-Term Strategies

Within 12 months

Get ahead of compliance challenges by engaging appropriate tax, immigration, and legal support:

- Short-term assignees surpassing typical 183-day stay thresholds
- US stimulus relief checks eligibility calculations potentially impacted by transfer cost/income
- Extended tax filing and payment deadlines
- Extended processing times for work permits/visas, and increased difficulty to obtain due to economic impacts

Revisit relocation benefits to address impacts from supply chain and real estate markets:

- Revisit home buyout programs impacted by market uncertainty, consider extending buyout offer period to avoid inventory
- Evaluate alternatives to home buyout, evaluate benefits for home rental and tenancy management services
- Reassess storage allowances, temporary living expenses, and lease extensions (due to impacts on supply chain and quarantines)

Long-Term Strategies

Over 12 months

Manage cost of insured programs:

- Assess international plan performances and evaluate plan design changes to negotiate lower renewals. Where medical policies have seen unusually low utilization, retrospective profit shares or premium holidays have been achieved
- Remarket and/or market check exercise to lower premiums
- Review communication practices to assignees with a view to enhance connectivity in the case of second waves of the virus

Identify savings opportunities more broadly:

- Reviewing benefits policies and practices to adjust mobility benefits proportionally to employee level, assignment type, transfer length, assignment goals, etc.
- Changing talent strategy, considering permanent relocations, and business travel vs. assignments

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To discuss any of the above, or support for your global benefits or mobility programs, please contact your Fidelity Managing Director or one of our global benefits consultants listed below:

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