

POST-PANDEMIC RELOCATION AND TALENT MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

Responses and Perspectives from North
American Public Service Leaders

May 2021

In partnership with



SENIOR
EXECUTIVES
ASSOCIATION



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1. Government Executive: A Guide to Attracting Talent in Government, 2020
 2. The Public Policy Forum- Building a Dynamic Future: The Next Generation of Public Service Talent 2017
 3. Government Executive: A Guide to Attracting Talent in Government, 2020
 4. Deloitte & Senior Executives Association- State of Federal Career Senior Leadership 2017
 5. Government Executive- More than 60% of Recent Federal Employee Hires Left Within Two Years, Eric Katz, 2020
 6. 2020 GSA OGP Business Travel and Relocation Dashboard
 7. Active military moves represent an additional 400,000 moves and may be a subject of future research analysis.
 8. U.S. P.L. 98-151, 5 USC Chapter 57, Section 5724 and Federal Travel Regulation Chapters 300-305.

Introduction

BGRS Relocation Inc., a global leader in employee relocation solutions for public and private sector organizations, and the Senior Executives Association (SEA), a nonprofit professional membership association representing the U.S. Government Senior Executive Service (SES), are delighted to share the results of this 2021 inaugural research project. The project reviewed employee relocation practice and its role in government talent strategies across North America. This report focuses specifically on the United States (U.S.) and Canadian government practices.

The research project covers relocation and its potential use in the acquisition and retention of talent in the federal government. Currently, government sectors in the U.S. and Canada face the threat of a “silver tsunami,” with around 20% of U.S. and 16% of Canadian federal employees potentially retiring within the next few years.^{1&2} The pressure is on to retain and develop existing talent and to attract new talent to fill the gaps. However, competition for talent is fierce and the public sector falls short of the private sector³ with regards to employee experience, digital qualifications, flexibility, and agility, as well as pay differentials. It has been widely reported that federal agencies are facing challenges in attracting and retaining top talent. In the U.S. only 27% report that their agency has a plan to attract talent from outside the federal government⁴ and more than 60% of federal new hires are leaving government within their first two years.⁵ Our research seeks to understand whether relocation opportunities are actively aligned with talent management strategies to acquire, develop and retain talent, and, if not, to identify the opportunities available to align them.

Because employee relocation expenses are combined with travel, the investment in these programs is frequently overlooked, yet the government investment is significant and moving people remains a mission imperative.

The U.S. government moves more than 29,000 civilian employees per year, at a cost of more than \$1.3 Billion.⁶ This excludes active military moves, which are considerably larger in volume⁷, but are not in scope for this research paper. Over 14,000 civilian employees and military personnel also move each year under the Canadian Government relocation programs, though the results of this research focus on civilian relocations for Canadian public service employees, rather than on military personnel relocations.

Both the U.S. and Canada have overarching laws and regulations⁸ which outline benefits and entitlements for employees as they move for government purposes and at government expense. The U.S. provides some latitude to agencies, bureaus, and departments to set their own policies within this framework. Canada's program is standardized among its government agencies. Our research shows Canada is providing an overall better customer experience and is better positioned to accurately track their costs and accountability than U.S. relocation programs.



The U.S. government moves more than **29,000 civilian** employees per year, at a cost of more than **\$1.3 Billion.**⁶



More than **14,000 civilian** employees and military personnel also move each year under the **Canadian Government relocation programs**

It is likely that Canada is more successful in these areas due to their program being standardized with one central relocation contract and contractor for the Government of Canada (GOC) and one contractor for the Canadian Armed Forces (CAF) relocation contract coordinating all other suppliers.

In Canada, the relocation contract holder is responsible for central administration of the program. While this contractor does not deliver all the relocation services, such as transportation, storage of household goods, or commercial travel arrangements, they are responsible for counseling the employees about eligible benefits and facilitating the hand-off of employees to other appropriate service providers. This single central contract administrator in Canada counsels each employee on their benefits, sets employee expectations, and ensures needs are being met. They also manage reimbursements to the employee for relocation costs and pay suppliers such as lawyers and home inspectors, on behalf of the employee. These two benefits, of a coordinated policy counseling, and managing employee relocation reimbursements, are factors in the comparatively successful administration of the Canadian program.

In the U.S., all reimbursements are handled by finance within the agencies, and relocation counseling is not administered consistently. Sometimes this counseling is provided in-house by an agency or it can be provided under contract by their relocation service provider. Practices vary greatly in the U.S. with some actually having centralized processes and more aligned talent approaches. But overall, the Canadian central administration model is significantly different from the U.S. agency structure and approach of independent governance and administration; it effectively maximizes the relocation experience for Canadian civilian and military government employees and provides a model of possible improvements for the U.S. relocation program.

Relocation presents a powerful tool in the arsenal of an employer – and our research looks forward into the value a well-run relocation program can bring to a strong organizational strategy when used proactively. We explore talent management potential and value in delivery, and some of the perceived barriers encountered today in realizing these intentions.

We have focused on the strategic value available and the gap between recruitment processes and talent management intention. As such this report does not attempt to cover every aspect of the end-to-end experience, but instead focuses on areas of disconnect, highlighting key opportunities in delivery and areas that could benefit from stronger integration.

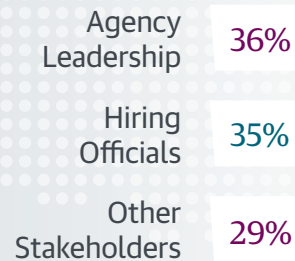
Methodology

- Online surveys designed specifically for U.S. and Canadian stakeholders
- Interviews with Federal senior agency executives, hiring officials, and relocation program practitioners across over 50 government departments, agencies, and offices
- Comparative analysis of U.S. and Canadian governments, and private sector perspectives including the BGRS 2021 Talent Mobility Trends Survey – Reinventing Mobility Beyond 2020⁹
- Literature Review of Government focused thought leadership and publications
 - Using the 2005 landmark benchmark study, the Governmentwide Relocation Advisory Board (GRAB) report¹⁰ as a comprehensive legacy baseline of recommendations for future government relocation, we reviewed a large range of contemporary government and talent management publications from sources such as the U.S. General Services Administration, Government Executive, The Public Policy Forum, Federal News Network, National Academy of Public Administration, IBM Center for the Business of Government, Deloitte, and EY, among others.



246 U.S. and 64 Canadian stakeholders surveyed

U.S.
stakeholders
included:




Participants

Our survey found that due to decentralized management and governance of moves, most U.S. agency respondents reported small move volumes of less than 25 moves per year. Relocation in these agencies is often a collateral function for the finance office or in a few cases, the Human Resources team. More than half (54%) of Canadian respondents, and 40% of U.S. respondents were unable to provide volume estimates, indicating a low awareness of overall program delivery or availability.

This may reflect respondents' perspective from a local or regional office rather than "agency wide." Regardless, the perception or reality of a small number of moves limits the opportunity for developing expertise, effectively supporting talent management objectives during the recruitment and selection process, and gaining economies of scale. It's worth noting that variance between approaches was considerable between U.S. agencies, and some agency models did indeed demonstrate strengths comparable to the Canadian program. However, these positive examples of talent alignment were found to be agency specific rather than department or government wide.

Geographies supported: Our U.S. respondents reported a broader number of move types across Domestic (61%), OCONUS (Outside Continental U.S.) (23%), and U.S. Territories and Possessions moves (16%). From Canada, most moves occurred domestically (88%), rather than internationally (12%).



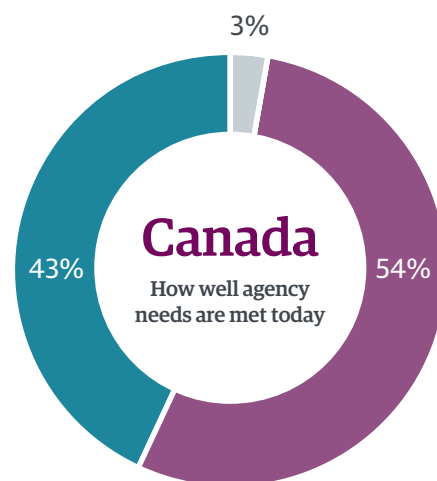
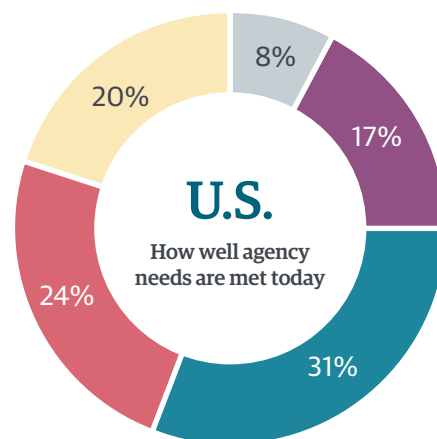
Recommendation: U.S. government agencies may benefit from centralizing the administration and management of relocation functions into master contracts or use of a shared service approach. Shared service approaches could be in a traditional sense, utilizing agency or department level shared service centers, but could also be through a contractor such as a Relocation Management Company. The shared service approach would be particularly beneficial for those with smaller programs who do not have internal resources or experience and could leverage economies of scale, improve employee experience, and align better with talent management.

Key Insights

Relocation program goals and objectives

Both Canada and the U.S. reported the primary purpose of relocation is talent acquisition (Canada 78%, U.S. 64%). After recruitment, U.S. agencies use relocation for professional and career development (50%) and talent retention (27%), while Canada focused more on talent attraction (60%) with talent retention also third (42%). More than half of the Government of Canada's relocations are new hires, with high talent attraction focus. About 40% of Canada's transfers are talent retention and internal moves from one department to another. The U.S. is not benefiting as strongly from using relocation as an "employer branding" or differentiation tool to attract key talent from the existing workforce, or to attract new talent. The private sector has evolved this practice and routinely highlights relocation and travel as a key component of employment reward, especially when appealing to millennial and Gen X generational stakeholders, where research has shown these offerings to be more powerfully attractive.

When asked how successfully relocation management is meeting organizational needs, reception was mostly positive, with over 50% of U.S. respondents rating this moderately well or higher. However, Canada provided a significantly more positive response with 100% rating moderately well or higher. This is likely influenced by the single contract for administration of the relocation program with a central point of contact to agency administrators and transferring employees all benefiting from standardized policy counseling and oversight.



Extremely well Very well Moderately well
Slightly well Not well at all

Solving talent challenges

Even though there was a generally positive opinion that relocation programs are meeting the primary objectives of talent acquisition, employee retention, and professional career development, we find a different story when looking more closely at the survey results, and interview discussions.

When delving into the performance of programs in relation to talent objectives, respondents were more critical. Relocation services were reported as not effective in attracting and retaining new talent and particular skillsets.

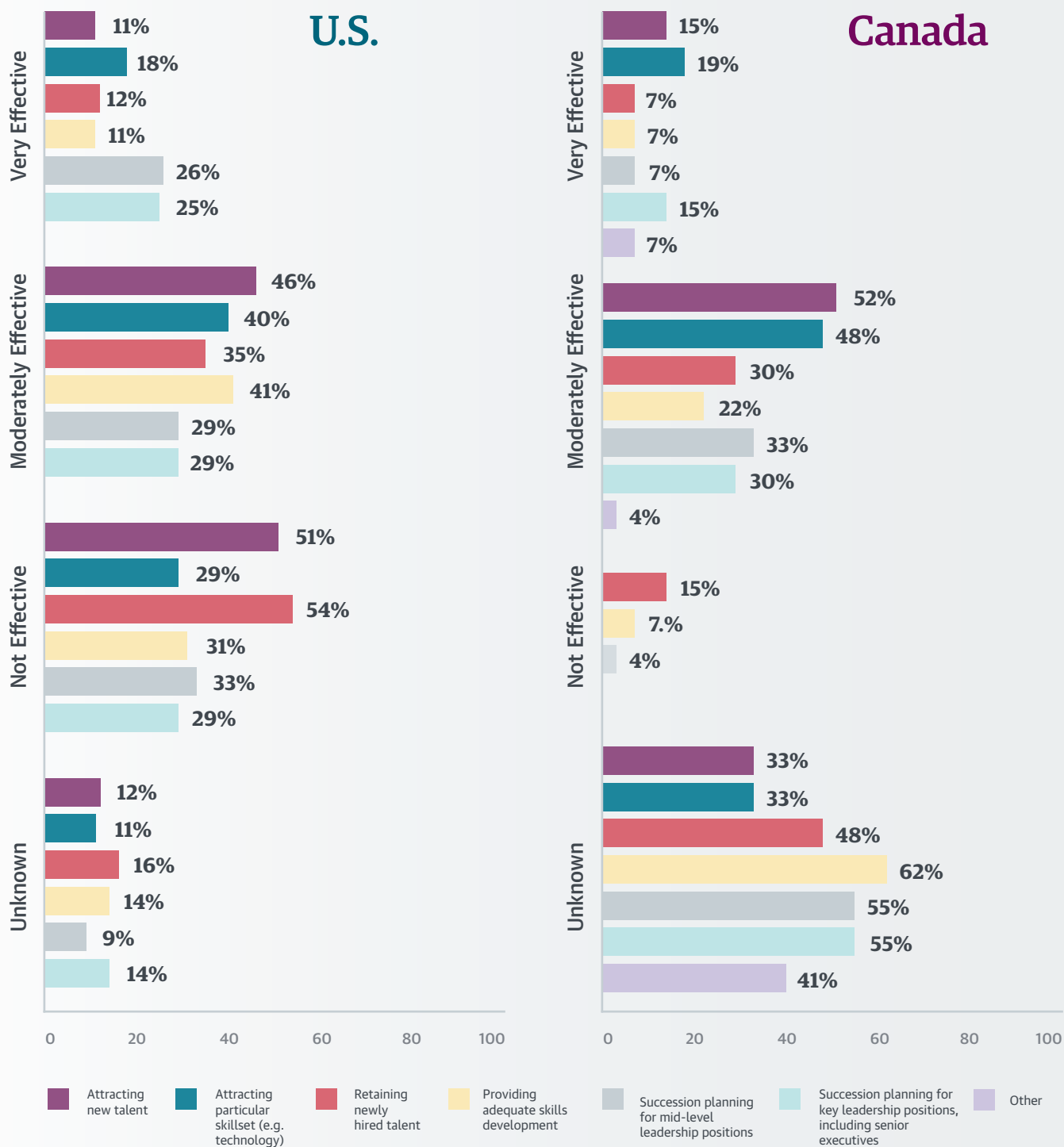
The same response was reported for providing adequate skills development or career development. **In the U.S., more than half (54%) believe their agency is not achieving agility or flexibility in response to shifting needs.** This is a real risk in adjusting to increasing changes in talent management.

“Our agency is clearly *behind the 8 ball*”

“CHCOs and HR don't *connect relocation...*as something to use as a tool in talent processes”

“Agencies are *slow to change...* and slower to admit they need help doing it”

How well relocation services solve talent challenges today:



In the U.S., more than half (54%) believe their agency is not achieving agility or flexibility in response to shifting needs

Positioning of relocation services

The level of alignment between relocation and talent was consistently reported as having room for improvement and opportunities. This may be tied to the fact that relocation is often viewed or structured as a subordinate event within the larger Travel function, and perceived as a logistics service with potentially less strategic attention awarded to it. Unlike the private sector, where employee relocation policies and administration are typically managed within Human Resources (HR), Talent or Reward functions, employee relocation in both the U.S. and Canadian governments is managed by multiple offices. In the U.S. government, relocation is rarely aligned with HR or talent and is more typically a function of finance and procurement.

Within much of the private sector and in some Government agencies, relocation is inextricably tied to talent management. Relocations are used not only to fill skills requirements and mission needs in specific locations, but also to intentionally develop skills and experience in key talent as a part of wider succession planning. Well managed and inclusive succession planning does not negatively influence equity or equal opportunity but maintains and grows a varied talent pipeline required for the skills shortages.



Recommendation: Reconsider relocations in the context of their relation to wider human capital strategies. Position relocations as opportunities to attract new talent demographics that desire relocation experience and to develop and retain career employees seeking growth and requiring diverse experiences to build their leadership capabilities.

Data-driven relocation program decisions

Overall, Canada reported a better experience with IT solutions for relocation program administration and customer experience than the U.S. However, neither the U.S. nor Canada reported doing an excellent job of using data to drive talent management and relocation decisions. One interviewee expressed frustration that data is only used *"in the rear-view mirror, and not as a roadmap"* and said that *"those that know enough, know they don't have enough data to plan in context."*

Digitization and better data usage are vital for effective decision making and are also a large contributing factor to employee experience, both in efficiencies of processes and information sharing, and in digitally enabled interfaces

that are increasingly expected from employees. Yet technology is not being enabled successfully in relocation management, as 45% in the U.S. and 27% in Canada consider their agency is not doing well in making use of data-based decision making, and an additional 39% in the U.S. and 28% in Canada say they are not doing well at integrating their data environment.

Only 29% of Canadian and 19% of U.S. respondents are confident that they have detailed reporting available from a cost-management platform in place for tracking expenses and exceptions across a full relocation.

Recommendation: Effective technology platforms, collection, integration, and usage of data should be improved in order to increase efficiencies, control actual costs, and support wider human capital management.



Success factors in relocation programs

U.S. reported low satisfaction by respondents in success factors for relocation: cost efficiency and savings were rated highest with 54% reporting these being delivered very or moderately well, but 30% considered these are not delivered well and overall one-third of respondents reported their agency is not doing well in any of the eight success factor areas covered.

We asked respondents to rank the importance of these success factors to their relocation delivery over the next 2 years...

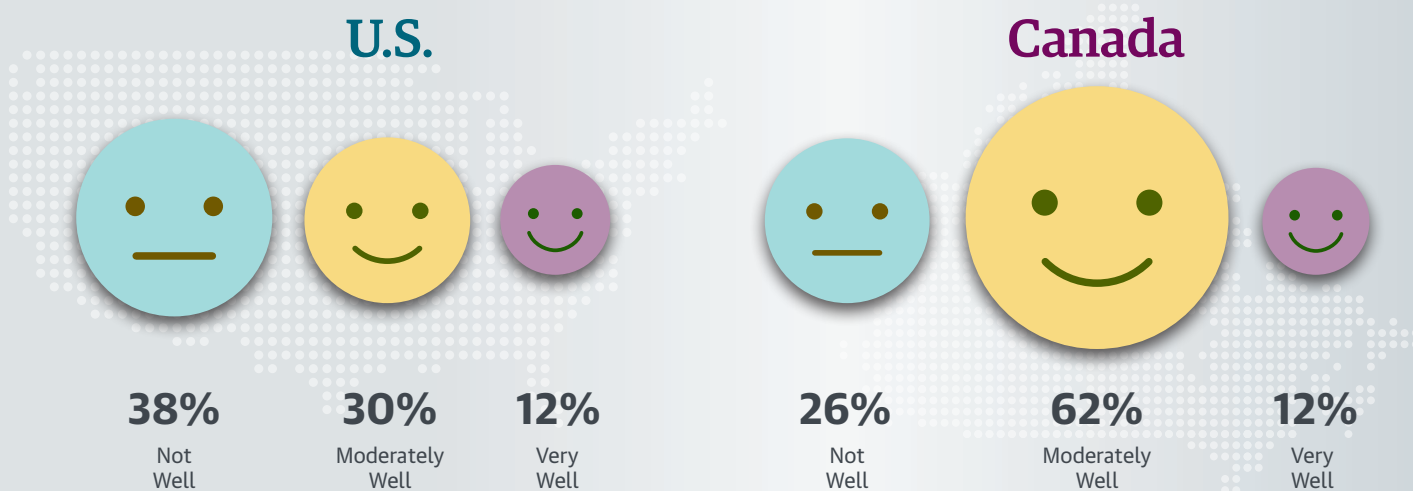
- ✓ Cost efficiency and savings
- ✓ Integration of data environment
- ✓ Effective tracking and reporting
- ✓ Data-based decision making
- ✓ Education and training for federal relocation specialists
- ✓ Effective policies and procedures
- ✓ Agility and flexibility in response to shifting needs
- ✓ Comprehensive home sale programs



Canada's results were consistently higher; over 90% reported cost efficiency and effective policies were being delivered well, with a further 80% reporting similar results for agility and flexibility, as well as effective tracking and reporting capabilities. However, education for relocation specialists is not perceived as being delivered well (reported by 50%) and presents opportunity for organizational investment and improvement.

Recommendation: Investing the time and resources in training and creating expertise in relocation practitioners would provide benefits not only by streamlining and creating efficiencies, but also directly impacting the employee experience of the relocation process. In the U.S. training tends to be "on-the-job" or through external participation in events (e.g. SHRM^{TM11}, WERC^{TM12}). Similarly, there is no centralized training program on relocations for Canadian government departments and coordinators and each department determines their training needs. As such, there is an opportunity to enhance the approach as to how both the U.S. and Government of Canada (G.O.C.) coordinators are onboarded and trained in their roles, including refresher training.

Average sentiment in relation to Relocation Success Factors*



*Totals may not reach 100% due to additional responses


Obstacles to overcome

What is getting in the way of improving delivery? We asked respondents where the biggest obstacles were, and U.S. results were clear – 54% reported insufficient funding or resourcing as a major challenge. Considering the scale (25 or less) moves per year of many of the respondents, this could be remedied by more centralized support through a shared services option that would allow for greater efficiencies of scale.

Legislation or regulatory changes and restrictions were identified by respondents as the next largest obstacle (47%). However, it should be noted that current laws and regulations provide flexibility within agency relocation programs in either country. U.S. government policies are not routinely reviewed by most agencies, and with a few exceptions, have remained largely unchanged for almost 40 years.

11. 'Society of Human Resource Management' www.shrm.org
12. 'Worldwide Employee Relocation Council' www.worldwideerc.org

Agencies can test pilot concepts with GSA's Office of Governmentwide Policy (OGP)'s approval, however, few wholesale concepts have been tested. One survey respondent wanted to see *"more oversight and direction from the department level. Set standards that must be applied across department rather than each agency establishing their own policies and procedures."* The "hands off" management approach to relocation means that often employees are left unsupported, stressed, and their self-managed arrangements are often not cost-effective. Another interviewee notes that direct reimbursement is often more expensive and slower overall than utilizing a formalized home sale process (where the employer purchases the home and arranges resale to accelerate the move process), but that there is a "skewed perception" and a "disconnect in cost." This is contrary to policies found in the private sector and can fail to provide employees with sufficient notice to move to plan a move efficiently.



Recommendation: After determining the essential roles that do require physical relocation, reconsider policy benefits in place in accordance with the objectives of the move. The relocation experience is tied to the retention of key talent and can be delivered in a way that saves costs overall as well as providing better support for the employee. Consider utilizing available home sale programs, temporary quarters, and spousal support more widely. These benefits can be managed through a shared service center or relocation management company for streamlining of the experience and cost efficiencies, especially for those with smaller move volumes.

In Canada, ineffective technology was reported as the biggest obstacle (64%), however, the U.S. and Canada shared the same challenges in regulatory impact (40%). The two countries share the challenge of operating inside of strict security guidelines and procurement practices which create limitations on IT applications to support the relocation program. While Canada reports only 12% encountering funding or resourcing as a challenge, a lack of capability to enable the technology's value is clearly causing challenges in delivery – echoing U.S. commentary on their progress to similar success factors.

When looking to improve programs, less than 20% of U.S. and less than 14% of Canadian respondents reported that they have utilized or participated in recent benchmarking studies with other agencies, with even smaller levels (4%) benchmarking to private sector comparators.

Recommendation: Benchmarking can be a valuable exercise, both for assessing current state and for developing a roadmap for change, whether to align with or consciously deviate from market practice. Considering the fierce competition for talent, benchmarking with the private sector in regard to benefit allocations and flexibility approaches could prove especially beneficial to provide effective packages for relocations.



Potential for change in relocation

Employee experience stood out as the key driver for change in the U.S., with nearly 70% reporting they would like to see this shift in relocation delivery. Clearly, respondents are seeing challenges in how employees are experiencing moves today.

More alignment with the recruitment function, enhanced discretion for regulator allowances, and better visibility of costs for failed moves all ranked as popular changes needed (at over 40%). Coupled with better visibility on return on investment (ROI) for relocation, these results indicate a missing and necessary connection between investments made in moves and accountability for the delivery of a positive return on these funds. This is especially true in a federal government climate. One survey respondent noted that *"failed moves are 'cleaned up' but not 'learned from'."* These results can only be achieved through stronger connection to talent processes which allow for monitoring and measuring the success of those who have been relocated or move criteria from the perspective of employee performance and retention.

Better technology was surprisingly the least selected option, given the earlier results of challenges with digitization. This indicates that *more awareness is needed on the value of technology capability to the function, especially in its impact on the employee experience.* Notably a recent report from the World Economic Forum labels governments as "the dinosaurs of the digital age: slow, lumbering, and outdated."¹³

Canada by contrast reported a clear need for better technology (56%), followed by focusing on employee experience value and improving ROI on relocation, sharing the same challenges as the U.S. towards integration in the talent agenda. One survey respondent stated: *"Technology is the bottom line... integrated onboarding, move management, and employee-initiated PCS vouchering applications must be adopted to modernize employee relocations."*

Changes wanted in relocation



U.S.: Most wanted change

More focus on
employee experience



U.S.: Least wanted change

Better technology



Canada: Most wanted change

Better technology



Canada: Least wanted change

Better visibility of cost of
failed moves

Connecting to talent

At what point is relocation as a process currently connecting with talent processes to deliver value? We asked respondents how relocation is actively used in their talent processes today; over half of Canadian (62%) and U.S. (56%) respondents reported they are using relocation opportunities or experience as a tool to attract new talent, and 67% of U.S. respondents reporting they would like to see relocations used more for talent strategy than at present. As an example of what can be achieved in this area, the United States Air Force (USAF) centralized the administration and management of its 170,000 civilian workforce during the 1990s. This central, standardized, and strategic management of their talent management needs has made it possible to recruit, develop, and move the right talent to meet worldwide mission requirements, while keeping a focus on budget and career development needs.

While the method in which they used relocation in their strategy and its success rate not formally measured, it is believed that relocation's part in the process benefits the USAF and keeps attrition low.¹⁴

Our results support the hypothesis that relocations are generally not being used strategically for attraction, retention, or development – instead, the focus in delivery is on mission needs and getting people physically to hard-to-fill positions or locations. This presents an enormous lost opportunity. Relocations offer a significant personal

development opportunity – and government relocation services are losing potential value on ROI in not positioning or maximizing delivery for this value. Robert Corsi, SEA President and former Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services at the U.S. Air Force, summed up the lost opportunity;

“ Agencies that are only reactive to relocation needs will never have an effective relocation program; Agencies that plan and develop their human capital including a centralized talent strategy will reap a significant ROI in the professional development of their workforce. ”

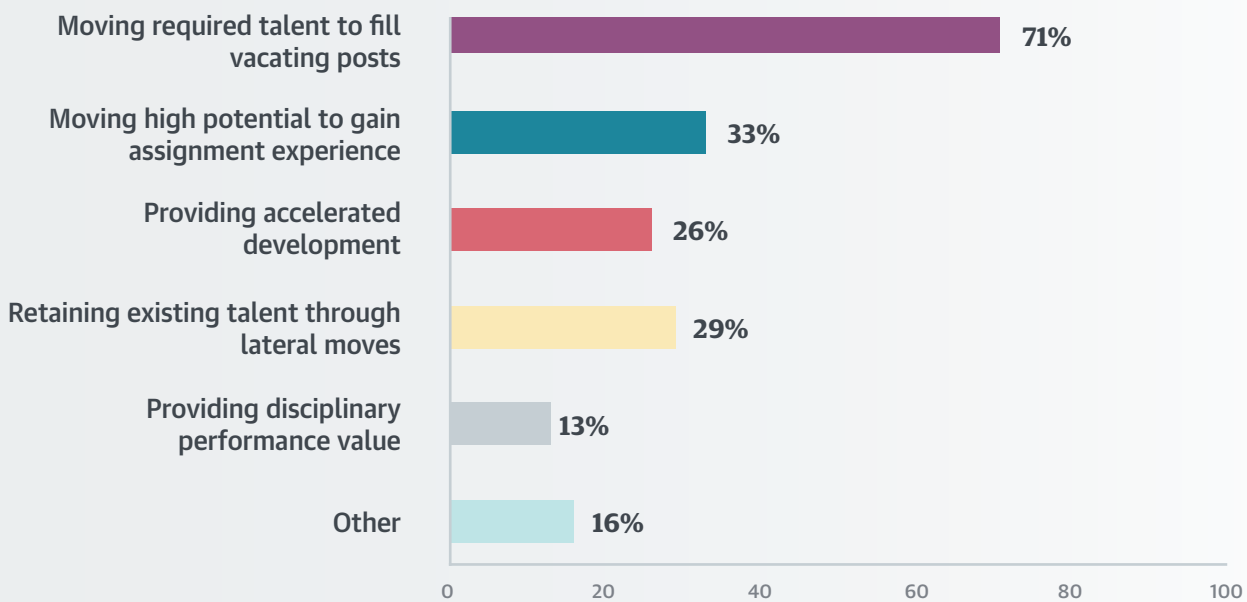
– Robert Corsi, SEA President and former Assistant Deputy Chief of Staff for Manpower, Personnel and Services at the U.S. Air Force

14. IBM Center for the Business of Government, Preparing the Next Generation of Federal Leaders, Agency-Based Leadership Development Programs, 2019



How is relocation used today in managerial succession planning?

U.S.



U.S. respondents report that relocation is predominantly considered in managerial succession plans to fill vacating posts. This demonstrates lost value where relocation delivery can be designed to provide experiential development for high potential talent, accelerated development growth, and existing talent lateral moves such as the USAF program described above. Where relocations occur for reasons of logistical need, opportunities exist for relocation delivery practitioners to better frame the career value available to those moving – relocation is reported as one of the most desirable career opportunities, particularly to younger demographics. A PwC survey found that 71% of millennials expect and want to do an overseas assignment during their career.¹⁵

Pandemic and remote/telework impacts

The global employment landscape is rapidly evolving as the world adapts to the new ways of working accelerated by the pandemic. As work has been increasingly done from home, many cities have seen an exodus as people move further out, away from the smaller spaces and higher costs of urban centers. Our research shows that 76% of U.S. and 80% of Canadian respondents expect to see a future increase in remote/telework following the pandemic. While remote working is not an option for all agencies and roles, many employees are likely to be asking whether it is possible to work remotely. *It is more important than ever to identify which roles can be done remotely and which cannot, then to adapt relocation support to attract new hires and retain the talent from existing employees.*

Government departments are having to rethink their approach and the set-up of their workforce, considering the potential compliance and tax implications that come with it, particularly across state and province taxation variances.

Employees or potential hires who want to work with more flexible work arrangements are looking for an employer who can offer a location of choice and remote/teleworking will be a large part of that going forward. Remote work provides many more opportunities for people to have developmental and rotational assignments or be redeployed to meet work needs, beyond what was thought possible pre-pandemic.¹⁶ However, many jobs will still need to be filled in person, and a more considered and experience-focused relocation process will be needed to fulfill talent needs effectively. This applies not only to practical on-site roles such as prison guards, border agents, ships' officers, nurses, welders, etc., but also to future leaders who will benefit from positive relocation experiences.

Respondents were less clear about ownership of flexible work arrangements, and how the relocation management experience can influence this increasing agenda in the future. Over 50% of respondents in both countries reported they were not expecting the relocation program to assume responsibility for employee-initiated remote working requests. This may well be as these requests are viewed as more suitable to be owned in another function such as HR or Travel, however, relocation specialists possess a skill-set uniquely capable of supporting a remote workforce. This presents an opportunity for increased value and ultimately ROI of the relocation function that should be considered.

In the private sector, relocation teams have been recognized as having compliance capabilities to support remote working/working from anywhere requirements: immigration, tax (including tax mutual deals across the U.S.), as well as travel and remote payroll, etc. which is why 45% of corporate sector relocation teams expect to be involved as a cross-functional business partner in remote/teleworking program design.¹⁷



15. PricewaterhouseCoopers- Millennials at work Reshaping the workplace 2011

16. Jane Datta, cited in Federal News Network- How Two Agencies are Thinking about a Post-pandemic, Partially Remote Federal Workforce- Nicole Ogrysko, 2021

17. BGRS 2021 Talent Mobility Trends Survey- Reinventing Mobility Beyond 2020

Looking to the future of government relocation

Key priorities for relocation delivery success in the next 12-24 months:

U.S.



Managing organizational impact of cost pressures (80%)



Changing relocation policies and benefits (77%)



Redefining relocation value proposition (74%)

Canada



Improving data and reporting availability and use (73%)



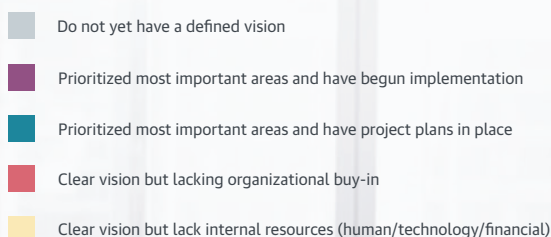
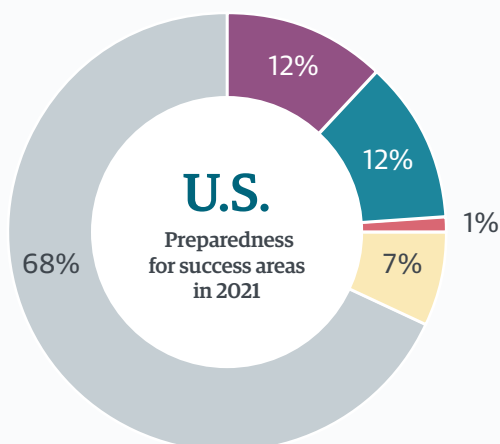
Understanding and addressing new compliance and risk requirements (including remote working) (71%)



Realigning relocation services to meet new employee needs (70%)

For the U.S. clearly cost pressures are a major concern; however, relocation must have a clear understanding and measurement of value to make a successful business case for where investment is needed and will deliver meaningful returns. Key to success will be data and intelligence to show where value can be central to achieving this objective, as well as the need for enhancements in both human capabilities and effective systems to achieve efficiencies. Digitizing relocation is however still relatively low on the priority list for both countries, with less than two-thirds identifying this as important. Over 20% of U.S. respondents considered digitization and improving data and reporting as not important for the function.

Duty of care also ranked unimportant or not applicable by 46% of Canadian and 50% of U.S. respondents. This is surprising given the recent pandemic and its impacts on employee moves, and the relevance that duty of care has for employee experience. In the private sector, improving duty of care procedures has been ranked as important or very important as a focus in the next two years by 79% of organizations surveyed,¹⁸ and is recognized as a key enabler to a positive employee experience.

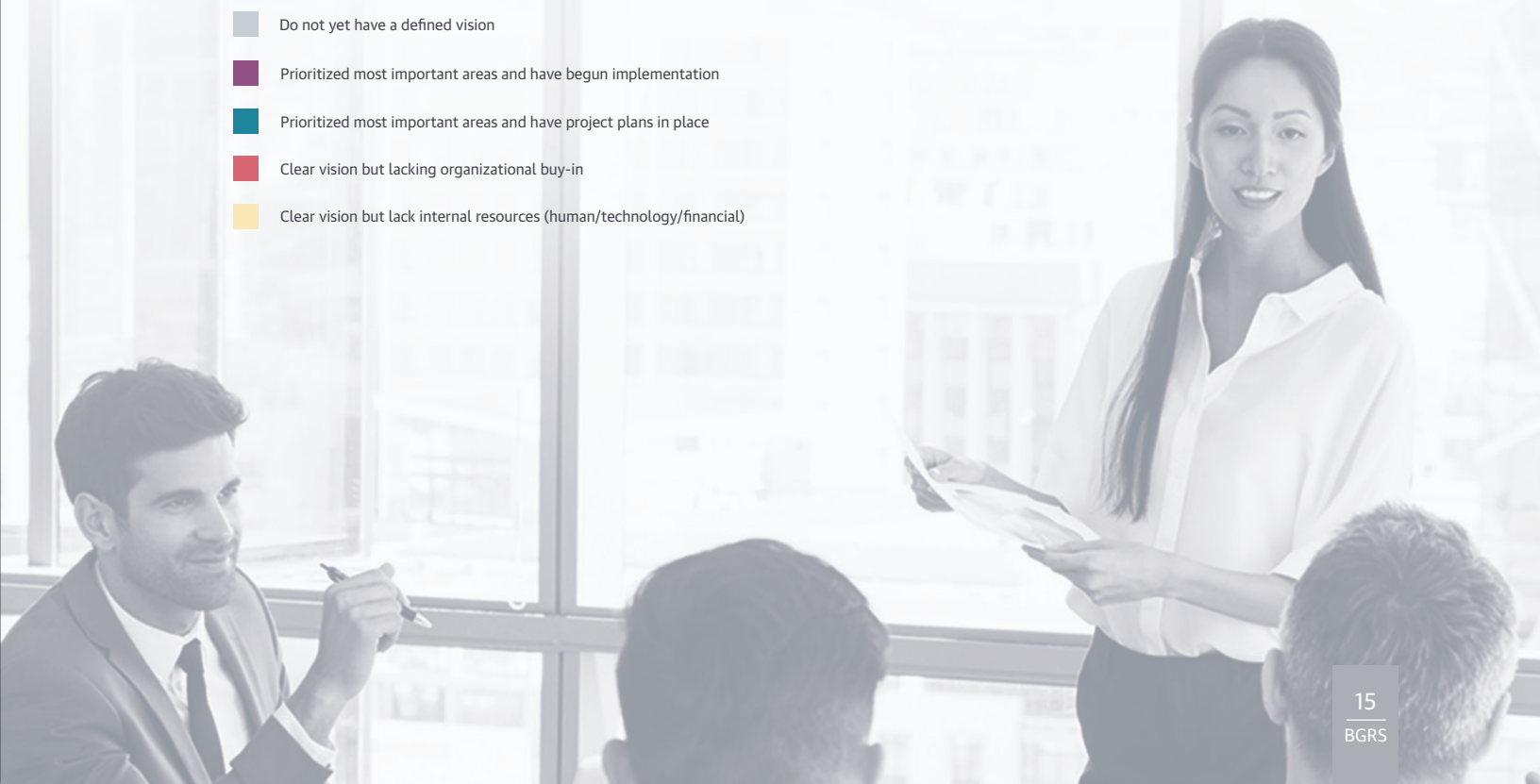


There is a wealth of opportunity ahead – but readiness is lacking to meet future relocation objectives. Sixty-eight percent (68%) in the U.S. and 63% in Canada stated they do not yet have a defined vision for 2021, and of those that do more are still struggling to achieve organizational buy-in or resources. To deliver these, detailed review of the future work landscape and agency or organizational needs will be necessary, linking delivery through to a sound business case of delivering talent value through employee moves.

The importance of having a clear vision from which to build agility and purpose has never been greater. One interviewee highlighted the lost resources in being reactive, rather than planning ahead:

“ If you're in a reacting mode, you're going to be wasting your money on a relocation unless you have an orchestrated process. ”

Where forward planning has not yet been achieved, 2021 presents the time to produce a vision for the future and shifts in workforce practices ahead.



Conclusion

There are improvements needed to maximize relocation program effectiveness in relation to agency human capital strategies. Programs cannot continue to remain static as they have for many years as competition for talent continues to increase. Instead, the focus needs to be on agility, employee experience, and better integration with talent acquisition and management structures within their agencies. In consultation with HR, relocation teams can define a future vision and determine the best usage of their policy benefits and processes that will address the workforce needs of the future. Agency agility is key and will provide the adaptability to shifting employee demands as well as unforeseen events, such as the pandemic.

Recommendations:

- Determine which essential roles require physical relocation in post-pandemic landscape and reconsider policy benefits in accordance with the objectives of the move
- Consciously align relocations to wider human capital and talent strategies
- Consider centralizing the administration and management of relocation function into master contracts/use of a shared service approach
- Improve technology platforms and data collection, integration, and usage
- Invest time and resources in training and creating expertise in relocation practitioners
- Benchmark against other government agencies/ departments as well as the private sector to align with market competitive practice

By implementing the recommended changes, tax dollars invested in relocations can be more clearly controlled in support of strategic investment in human capital. The employee experience will be inexorably improved, and the return on investment made central to defined talent management objectives built into program delivery. Where physical moves are needed for effective workforce planning, relocation can and should play a vital role in attracting, developing, and retaining key talent.





ABOUT BGRS

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