

AN IN-DEPTH LOOK AT

DESTINATION SERVICES

Answering the most common questions about destination services and why they should be a key component of your global mobility program.



Destination Services Overview

There are two sides to every relocation: the departure side and the destination side. While departure benefits, such as home sale and lease breaks, are important, you can't forget about the **destination services** your employee will require for a successful relocation.

Introduction

In today's globalized business landscape, companies are increasingly relying on relocating employees domestically or through international assignments to expand their operations, foster talent development, and capitalize on emerging market opportunities. However, these relocations and assignments present unique challenges for both employers and employees. To address these challenges effectively, mobility teams are looking at the breadth and depth of the departure and destination services they are currently offering in their policies.

To compare your global mobility program to other companies' destination service offerings for relocating employees and assignees, please see WHR's **Destination Services Benchmark Study**. While WHR works with dozens of destination services companies to relocate employees to over 100 countries annually, this benchmark study contained 32 destination services companies covering 56 countries around the world.

Destination services play a crucial role in facilitating the success and smooth transition of employees and their families, in adjusting to a new environment and lifestyle. Every move has its challenges, regardless of if the move is U.S. domestic or overseas. Providing your employees with the right destination services goes a long way toward helping them to succeed, along with reducing any mobility risk factors. Because of this, many companies turn to a relocation management company (RMC), like WHR Global, to ensure all the pieces are in place.



First Impressions Count

The quality and types of support an employee receives in the destination location has a significant impact on the tone and success of their new role or assignment. Creating a **positive first impression** helps to establish trust between the RMC's Relocation Counselor, Destination Services Provider (DSP), and the employee/family, reducing stress, and giving them **confidence and peace of mind**.

This transition is a stressful time in their lives and the uncertainty of their new situation requires empathy, compassion, and attention to detail on behalf of the Counselor and DSP. Ensuring that your employee (and family) is completely settled-in to the new location means you will have a **happier, better adjusted, and more productive employee**.



Prioritizing the Employee and Family Needs

During the intake call and prior to the administration of any benefits, the RMC's Relocation Counselor will collect information on the employee's needs, address timelines, counsel them on your policy, and explain all the benefits that are available to them. This call provides the opportunity for the Relocation Counselor to get to know what is important to the employee and family and align their expectations with your policy to ensure any exceptions are managed upfront.

After the intake call, the Relocation Counselor ensures all information is recorded and stored in the system and drives the process until the close of the last benefit. This information is conveyed to the chosen Destination Service Partner to ensure they provide services that specifically align with the employee and/or family's needs.

At this point in the relocation, it is critical for the RMC to share as many details and relevant documentation (with the employee's consent) with the DSP as possible to reduce duplicate requests for the same information, documents, and timelines. This is often a large source of frustration among employees but can largely be avoided as the Relocation Counselor should act as a single point of coordination among all supplier partners.

The Relocation Counselor may share additional details with the DSP to enhance the employee and family's experience, such as:

Prior Relocation Experience

If they've relocated in the past and how it went – they could be excited, nervous, or a combination of feelings

Familiar with Destination

If they're familiar with the host/destination location already

Housing Preferences

Their housing preferences, desired neighborhoods, and budgets

Children and/or Dependents

Information on children or other dependents, including age(s), grades, and schooling preferences

Other Information

Other relevant information such as: pets, family members with disabilities, elderly dependents, LGBTQ+ considerations, & more

Destination Service Essentials



Service: Pre-Decision Trip

Recommended Duration: 2 Days

The purpose of a pre-decision trip (also referred to as a preview or home finding trip) is to see if the relocation or assignment is the right choice for a particular employee. This process includes a needs assessment to assign a Destination Service Provider, real estate, or rental agent to meet with the employee during their visit to help address up front questions about living in the new location, schooling, and beginning the housing search.



Service: Departure Services

Recommended Duration: 1 Day

Departure services can encompass many tasks to ensure your employee is fulfilling all obligations before leaving their home/departure location. Departure services can include immigration components such as cancellation of employment passes, dependent passes, or deregistration with applicable authorities before departure. Other services may include lease cancellation, property check-out services, and security deposit repayment. If the same RMC coordinated the employee's initial arrival, documents (such as lease agreements), security deposit payments, and property condition reports and photos, these are usually retained in the RMC's system through a tenancy management tool. These original documents are emailed back to the employee and DSP after their tenancy to ensure all security deposits are returned, and that security deposit deductions are justified based on photo evidence of damages.



Service: Temporary Housing

Recommended Duration: 45 Days

Sometimes housing can't be secured at the time the employee needs to report for their new position. In the event that this happens, they will need help coordinating temporary housing.

Most companies offer temporary housing as a benefit to their relocating employee population. While it may be costly, and isn't ideal for the employee, it does help them feel less stressed and be more productive in the new location, making it an integral part of any great destination services package.

Corporate relocation isn't always long-term, which is why we maintain a network of corporate or temporary housing providers and hotel chains. Offering this service allows short-term transferees to feel at home anywhere, no matter for how long. Your relocation provider should work with temporary housing providers that, at a minimum, conduct unit inspections 24 hours prior to employee arrival, supply an inspection sheet for every unit with recent photos, and provide a phone number for 24/7 emergency assistance.

In order to control costs, many companies choose to cap this benefit, either monetarily or by timeframe. For this very reason, it is essential that your RMC have a strong network of corporate housing providers. Using both local and national companies will ensure that you are able to offer a unit that meets all your employees' housing needs.



Service: Area Orientation

Recommended Duration: 0.5 Days

Navigating the complexities of international assignments requires a thorough understanding of the destination. Area Orientation services play a pivotal role in facilitating a smooth transition for relocating employees and their families. Beyond aiding in the decision-making process, these services provide an invaluable opportunity for employees to visualize their upcoming life in a new city, state, and/or country. Orientation Tours provide a realistic overview, empowering employees to make informed decisions and kick-start their assignments seamlessly. Whether conducted in person or online, these tours contribute significantly to a stress-free relocation experience, aligning with the diverse needs of global mobility.

Destination Service Essentials



Service: Home Finding Recommended Duration: 2 Days

After your employee learns a little more about the city, they can start the home search. It can be difficult to make the transition to a new city. Working closely with local agents who know the ins and outs of the city makes the process simpler and less stressful for the employee. Your RMC should be equipped to help connect your employees with qualified local real estate agents to help them find the home of their dreams, be it an apartment to rent or a new home to buy.



Service: Rental Assistance Recommended Duration: 2 Days

It is important to understand that not all employees will choose to purchase in the new location for a U.S. domestic relocation. Renters are increasingly involved in the relocation process, and many homeowners are becoming renters based on financial and real estate market conditions.

Internationally, the availability of rental properties in some countries is limited and may require an extension of Temporary Housing benefits while a rental property is secured.

Incent to Rent

While not a common benefit, an “incent-to-rent” program offers you the ability to save significantly on future relocations. The “incent-to-rent” benefit gives current homeowners a bonus if they decide to rent in the new location instead of purchase. This is commonly offered to employees who relocate frequently and allows the company to avoid paying closing costs on the new home purchase and any future home sale costs.



Service: Settling-In Services Recommended Duration: 0.5 Days

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Service: Spouse/Partner Assistance Recommended Duration: 1 Day

One of the primary reasons an employee will turn down a relocation assignment or end up in a failed situation is because their spouse was not given enough support. Helping your employee’s spouse find new employment, build a résumé, network in the new location, learn a new language, or adapt to a new culture, can make all the difference for your transferring employee and their family. This will also help you avoid employees turning down a relocation and avoid losing out on great talent.

In **WHR’s Culture + Mobility Benchmark Study**, we found that only 39% of companies offer spousal assistance to their international population. Because relocating internationally adds another level of stress for the employee’s family, we believe incorporating this benefit will go a long way in helping you secure the right person for the available role.

A Case in Point

In 2021 and 2022, WHR was having difficulties finding short-term housing for two of our multi-national clients in Zurich. Each provides temporary housing benefits (30-90-day stays) to their relocating employees while looking for permanent or long-term housing. Since both clients' offices are a 45-minute tram ride from the Zurich city center, and the short-term housing vacancy rate was less than 1%, WHR proactively partnered with a regional destination services provider and formulated a plan.

The partner procured housing units in Zurich a short distance from the respective offices, furnished them, and then WHR brokered an agreement with its two clients to share costs and reduce overall risk. Each client would have the right of first refusal to a dedicated number of temporary housing units, and if the units were not reserved in time, they would be available to lease on the open market to keep costs low. According to market research on Zurich temporary housing, 2- and 3- bedroom furnished apartments commonly range from CHF 5'000 to 7'250 per month. With a dedicated pool of apartments, WHR expects to save its clients approximately 6-26% per apartment booking.

This illustrates WHR's ability to deliver cost savings to clients, and benefits to their assignee populations as well. This includes reduced stress and higher productivity: guaranteed accommodation allows for the employee to focus their time and energy on their home search, shipment, local registration, and their new role in your organization.

View the complete WHR case study here: [WHR Temporary Housing Case Study](#).



Key Benefits

The following are key reasons why comprehensive destination services benefit both your organization and your employees.

| Benefits for the Employee | Benefits for the Employer |
|---|--|
| <p>Orientation and Familiarization</p> <p>Destination services typically include orientation sessions where the employee is introduced to their new city or town. This helps them become familiar with the local culture, amenities, transportation options, and important landmarks. Being acquainted with their surroundings can ease the transition and make them feel more at home, enabling them to focus on their work more effectively.</p> | <p>Attracting Top Talent</p> <p>Offering comprehensive destination services can make your company more attractive to prospective employees, especially those who may be hesitant to relocate due to the challenges involved in moving to a new location. This can help you attract top talent from a wider pool of candidates, enhancing the quality of your workforce.</p> |
| <p>Spousal and Family Support</p> <p>Relocating can be challenging for the family members as well. Destination services often extend support to accompanying spouses and family members by offering job search assistance, social integration programs, and access to community networks. Ensuring the well-being and happiness of the employee's family can contribute to the employee's overall success and satisfaction in their new location.</p> | <p>Employee Retention</p> <p>Relocation can be stressful, and inadequate support during this process may lead to dissatisfaction among employees. By providing excellent destination services, you demonstrate your commitment to supporting your employees' well-being and success, which can foster loyalty and increase employee retention rates.</p> |
| <p>School Search Assistance</p> <p>If the employee has children, finding the right school is crucial. Destination services can help them navigate the local education system, provide information about schools in the area, and even assist with enrollment processes. Ensuring their children have access to quality education can alleviate stress and enable them to focus on their professional responsibilities.</p> | <p>Reduced Relocation Costs</p> <p>Efficient destination services can help streamline the relocation process, reducing the time and resources required to move employees to their new locations. This can lead to cost savings for your firm, as well as minimize productivity disruptions associated with lengthy relocation procedures.</p> |
| <p>Settling-in Assistance</p> <p>From obtaining necessary documents and permits to setting up utilities and banking services, destination services can assist with various administrative tasks involved in settling into a new location. Having this support can save the employee time and energy, allowing them to focus on integrating into their new role and environment seamlessly.</p> | <p>Faster Onboarding and Productivity</p> <p>When employees receive comprehensive support in settling into their new location, they can focus more quickly on their new roles and responsibilities. This can lead to faster onboarding and higher productivity levels, as employees are less distracted by the challenges of adapting to a new environment.</p> |
| <p>Cultural Integration Support</p> <p>For those on an international assignment, adjusting to a new culture can be challenging, especially if they're relocating to a country with different customs and norms. Destination services often offer cultural training or intercultural coaching to help them understand and adapt to the cultural nuances of their new location. This can enhance their communication skills, improve relationships with colleagues and clients, and ultimately contribute to their success in the new environment.</p> | <p>Improved Employee Satisfaction and Engagement</p> <p>Employees who receive adequate support during relocation are more likely to feel valued and appreciated by their employer. This can lead to higher levels of employee satisfaction, engagement, and morale, ultimately contributing to a positive work culture and higher performance levels across the organization.</p> |

International Coverage and Consistency

It stands to reason when you're seeking a partner to handle your global destination services requirements, you're going to want a provider who offers these services in the same countries where you have operations. This means you should select a partner who has proven international experience, regional offices, and established partnerships for those countries where you relocate your employees. This means that service for many countries is less dependent on in-country resources, and more dependent on how your Relocation Management Company manages these third-party relationships to provide your employees with comprehensive services, on the ground support, and an **overall seamless experience**.

Summary

Destination services play a vital role in facilitating successful relocations and assignments, addressing the concerns of both employers and employees, and ensuring the smooth transition of talent across borders. Offering high-quality destination services for relocating employees can yield significant benefits for your firm, including improved recruitment outcomes, cost savings, higher employee retention, and enhanced reputation. By prioritizing the well-being and success of your employees during the relocation process, you can create a more supportive and productive work environment for your entire workforce.

A successful employee relocation hinges on thoughtful destination services that extend beyond departure logistics. By partnering with a reliable relocation management company (RMC), companies can address the diverse needs of their relocating employees, ensuring a smooth transition to the new location. From area orientation and spousal assistance to home finding, mortgage programs, and settling-in services, a comprehensive approach enhances employee well-being and ultimately contributes to a more satisfied and productive workforce. Embrace the power of strategic destination services to facilitate successful relocations and cultivate a positive corporate culture.

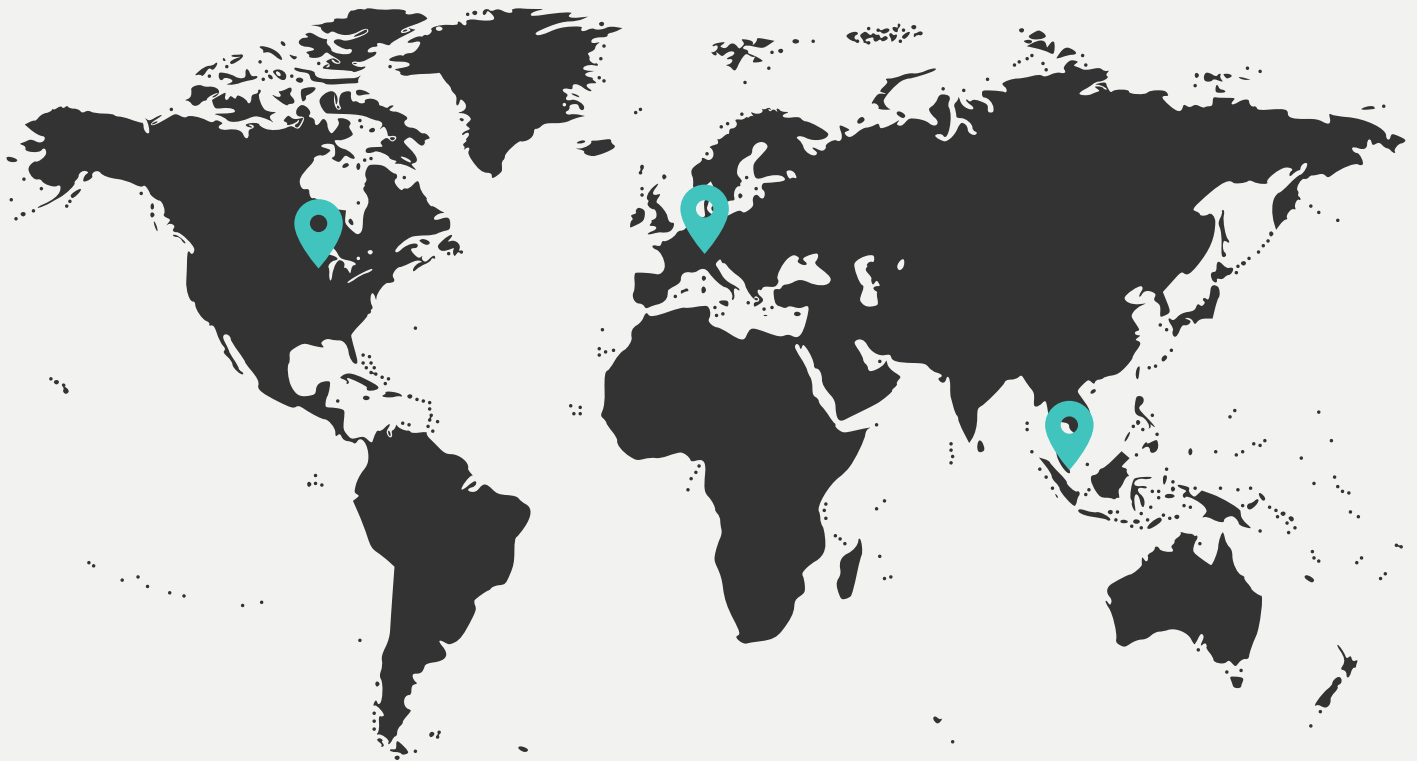
Further Information

Check out our recent Destination Services Benchmark here:
[Ask an Expert! Destination Services Benchmark Report](#)

Culture + Mobility Benchmark Report
[Global Mobility and Culture Benchmark Study | WHR Global](#)



WHR Global is an independent, full-service relocation management company with offices in the US, Switzerland, and Singapore. Since 1994, WHR Global has been a leader in the global mobility industry dedicated to Advancing Lives Forward® for employers and their global workforces. With a proprietary technology suite, WHR strives to offer cost-effective relocation benefits without compromising empathy, ethics, or service.



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