

EVIP Relocation

EVIP Services: The Importance of Providing Both Flexibility and High-Touch Services

Due to an increased focus on employer and employee flexibility and the constant drive for an improved employee experience through compensation and benefit measures, recent years have seen a move toward more flexible options with minimized handholding through the relocation process for most employees. While these adaptations to traditional relocation models have proven benefits for some programs, there is still a need to provide a higher-touch service delivery option for some employees, especially at C-suite or executive leadership levels.

It should not be assumed that this category of employee does not require a flexible program. On the contrary, many executive-level employees have relocated a number of times in their careers, so they understand exactly what they need and have a desire to remove themselves from the coordination of the relocation process. Consequently, these employees often require benefits that are tailored to their own specific and often pre-defined requirements. Some are nomadic in lifestyle and don't require shipping allowances, for example, but will require furnished accommodations in the host location. Others will have high-value household goods that require specialist handling or would prefer increased home leave if they have split-family circumstances. In any situation, we should never confuse the need for flexibility with the need for high-touch services. An executive VIP (EVIP) employee is likely to need both.

An executive VIP (EVIP) employee – typically a C-suite executive or senior staff member, needs personalized attention and proactive support that allows them to focus on their families and new roles, reducing their stress and facilitating the smoothest move possible.

It is in the interest of both a global mobility team and a provider to ensure that an EVIP relocation experience runs smoothly, often referred to as a 'no noise' experience. As such,

SIRVA ensures that it will be delivered by an executive mobility specialist (EMS). Such employees are typically afforded an elevated experience.

Once an organization has assigned an employee EVIP status, it is then prudent to determine whether a standalone executive policy is required or if an approved exceptions list for the EVIP might be sufficient. This really depends on the company's program and culture. Companies might change their compensation structure or shares options for an EVIP. Equally, they may have a pre-defined list of additional support elements, such as extra time for home-finding trips or an accompanied school support program.

What Makes an EVIP Program Successful?

When asked to identify the most important service element needed for an EVIP, SIRVA client contacts have always responded with the answer, *No noise*. It is critical for the business that executive leaders are relocated quickly and effectively, with no service challenges – that each step of the relocation be anticipated, and the transition thoroughly and effectively planned from the beginning. A smooth transition ensures that the EVIP can concentrate fully on organizational goals, without being distracted by the day-to-day requirements that accompany a relocation, let alone any complications that may arise. It has, therefore, been recognized that a different scope of support should be offered to an EVIP compared to any other assignee or transferee in the organization.

SIRVA's EVIP Program

SIRVA has responded to this need by developing a comprehensive EVIP service model, in which executives are assigned a dedicated executive mobility specialist (EMS) with at least 5 years of robust experience in managing cross-border and domestic relocations; these professionals must also have performed at a consistently high standard. The EMS becomes the employee's personal relocation assistant for the duration of the move, always working two or three steps ahead in the relocation process to anticipate and address any challenges along the way.

The First Crucial Element of Success

The first crucial element of success is to plan the relocation program before initiating services. Unlike a business-as-usual relocation, a consultant should be involved in the planning stages of the move, often before a letter of assignment (LOA) is even issued. The EMS will liaise with the employee's support staff and the organization's HR/mobility teams to determine who the employee is, what elements are critical to his/her success in the relocation, whether they have moved before, and what their previous experiences have consisted of. It is important to note that while an EVIP may have experienced a relocation prior to the assignment in question, a new country (or location within his/her current country of residence) may present new challenges and nuances that the EVIP would not know to anticipate. The EMS will work closely with the organization and EVIP to identify these areas, communicate them, and manage expectations. Importantly, this early preparation allows the EMS to prepare all third-party partners who will be supporting the various elements of the move, and to advise the business on whether there are any red flags related to the planned timeline, such as immigration or schooling requirements. This is especially important if the employee is a regular and frequent business traveller, which may need to be executed on a second passport or postponed until the immigration process has been completed.

Planning a Seamless Relocation is Key

Next, planning a seamless relocation is key. Often, an assignment or contract start date for a C-suite executive can have critical business or regulatory implications if it is missed or must be delayed. The role of the EMS is to liaise with the business to understand when the employee must arrive at his/her destination – and then to work backwards to develop a timeline of critical events and determine when they need to be completed.

SIRVA's high-touch, high-communication program ensures that the EVIP knows exactly what will happen and when, as information is shared at every key milestone. Our skilled executive mobility specialists deliver the highest quality of service, taking care of every aspect of a relocation so executives are free to focus all of their attention on the company goals they've been tasked with.

Some key advantages specific to our EVIP program include:

- EMS-led service provider calls on behalf the EVIP, to minimize employee responsibility and stress, allowing for greater EVIP focus on company goals and objectives
- EVIP and EMS access to SIRVA senior leadership for any issue-resolution requirements
- Senior SIRVA EMS leadership attendance and participation on key dates such as the packing and loading of household goods or the checking in/out of a rental property
- EMS scheduling of appointments and executive management of administration
- EMS availability for inquiries, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, through direct contact via mobile or technology
- Concierge, maid, and handyman services in both home and host locations

Additional benefits include:

- An elevated level of communication
- Up-front communication of all key dates and milestones, with real-time updates provided on an EVIP-approved cadence
- A single point of contact throughout the relocation
- A dedicated resource for support
- A bespoke and tailored experience from start to finish

Technology

An additional benefit SIRVA can offer during an EVIP relocation is advanced technology that complements the highly personal services the EMS provides. Importantly, our technology allows the relocating employee with the authority to assign a delegate, who is permitted full access to all data under their own login credentials. When working with an EVIP, SIRVA will typically liaise with a personal assistant or spouse. Allowing a delegate to have full access to all relocation information is a practical solution, allowing the EVIP to remain focused on their corporate function. The technology is fully accessible on iPhone, android, or tablet, meaning all information – including contact details for the EMS – is available ‘on the go.’ If the relocating employee has our app, they have all they need to access all of their relocation needs.

Flexibility to Meet Unique EVIP Needs

No two EVIPs are alike, which means their relocation needs and circumstances will also vary. With this in mind, flexibility must always be a key component of any EVIP relocation. SIRVA’s established global networks and proven systems streamline standard processes, allowing our executive mobility specialists to determine and focus on any needs that are unique to each individual EVIP, early in the process. In addition, any unforeseen circumstances, delays, or last-minute changes that require attentive, immediate action are met creatively and swiftly. This level of attention and flexibility results in a personalized touch throughout the move.

Striking the Right Balance to Support Company Goals

While there are many possible approaches to EVIP support during a move, we’ve found that the most successful relocations depend on the right balance between high-touch services and flexible support. EVIPs are typically counted on by organizations to provide specialized skills as soon as possible, upon arrival in their host destinations. By providing EMS support at every phase of the relocation, SIRVA allows the EVIP to focus more fully on organizational goals, faster. Immediate contact, up to date information that is available in real-time throughout the move, proactive coordination every step of the way, and easy-to-use technology that is employee-minded are all strong components of our EVIP support program.

For more information on ways that SIRVA can assist with your EVIP relocations, please contact us at conciierge@sirva.com.