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NURSES WEEK

Is Relocation Right for You?

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SPECIAL TO NURSES WEEK

"The job is ideal and has much of what I want in a new position ... only I wish it were located here" ... is a comment we hear when a job opportunity comes about that spurs thoughts of relocation. Let's examine some of the issues nursing professionals could face when they reach that part of the process:

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■ Travelers or Contract

Nurses -- just LOVE to travel. Their attitude is based on "how much of the world can I see?" Sometimes a nurse who is a "traveler" can be an individual who is in a job transition and utilizes relocating as a means of identifying a certain geographic part of the country where they would truly like to settle for their permanent full-time job.

■ **Individuals** -- They often think about relocation to a new area as a means of following through on plans that have been on the "back burner" to move to a specific area for weather, family, cost of living, quality of life, or an assortment of other reasons. We recommend that an individual discuss a move with their support system and evaluate how relocating will affect relationships on a distance basis, as well as if the opportunity presented offers career growth for the long term.

■ **Families/ Spouses/Significant Others** - START TALKING AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

It is of paramount importance when an individual engages in conversation with a hospital/facility about relocating that they discuss the prospect of moving with family members at the beginning of the interview process or sooner. Preferably, the family discussion should be had before the first phone or in-person interview has taken place. Failure to take this step in the early stages can produce hurt feelings, resistance and reactive remarks. The family needs time to sort through the possibility of "could this be for real?"

As an example, if the spouse or significant other is a working partner who will also need to consider job options they need to begin to investigate this aspect for themselves as well as the family. Children can be very opinionated about their needs and wants, especially if they are already established in a particular school system and have a network of friends. Sometimes children are fearful of physically moving to a new environment. The question of "do we really want to do this?" frequently comes up.

Much of the topic of relocation has to do with the way the individual who has been searching for a new job presents it to the family, and if "change" is embraced as a positive experience, new adventure or better job opportunity, or for enhanced quality of life, financial reward, weather conditions, etc. Then, the likelihood of success in acceptance is easier.

Facilities offer a myriad of inducements and enhancements to the job seeker to attract and assist them: temporary housing; real estate contacts; sign-on bonuses; tuition reimbursement; and time off to study in exchange for a longer commitment to the organization for employment.

One of the up sides to relocation is that often organizations will offer to pay for individuals and their families to visit and investigate the new area. This might include attending culture events, identifying possible housing areas and visiting schools.

While favorable to the potential employer, the down side to a candidate is that organizations may also extend their offer of employment with a condition that the individual who is accepting the position commit to staying with the facility for a specified period of time. And if they leave beforehand, they are responsible for a portion of the relocation costs to be paid back to the employer. Relocation costs can be in the form of a flat fee that a facility pays to the candidate prior to their move. Organizations may also ask the individual to obtain 3 bids from moving companies with the one that is most amenable to both employee and potential employer being chosen.

Employers will offer temporary housing in a short-term housing facility at the institution's expense, so as to give the individual time to find a more permanent residence. One of the most important items that a potential candidate needs to have at this juncture is a knowledgeable real estate firm. Many times institutions have contacts in this arena and their support is vital to the success of any relocation.

Given the cost of housing in today's market, people who have not explored the market are often faced with "sticker-shock." However, job candidates considering relocation must compare costs to the financial compensation package being offered by the prospective employer. Salary levels for the same job in four different areas of a state can be different. Individuals are advised to do their homework ahead of time. The time to complete salary offers is before, not after they have accepted the job.

Bobbie Stone is president of Bobbie Stone International, LLC; an executive search firm located in Princeton, specializing in the recruitment and retention of nursing leadership; clinical management; non-clinical management and senior management executives solely serving the hospital community across the healthcare continuum. For more information, call (866) 750-1500.