

THE INITIAL INTERVIEW

The initial interview with the displacee is the most important part of the whole relocation process. This is the time in which the relocation advisor can make a positive impression with the displacee, gain their trust and establish the rapport that can either make the experience a success or failure.

Prior to the meeting the relocation advisor should become familiar with the general locale of the property to be acquired, the specifics of the proposed acquisition and the potential impacts on the remaining property, if any.

The relocation advisor should make every effort to schedule an appointment with the displacee at a time that is convenient and at a location that is comfortable for the relocatee, within reason.

The purpose of the initial meeting is the giving and getting of information. The relocation advisor may be the first person from the Iowa Department of Transportation who the displacee has met one on one.

If the displacee has had previous dealings with the Department, he or she may have either positive or negative attitudes that will either help or hinder the relocation process. The displacee uses these prior experiences as a frame of reference when interpreting words and symbols used by the advisor. Acronyms and other phrases we use on an everyday basis should be kept to a minimum in order to increase the displacee's understanding of our purpose and the options available to them.

The advisor should be prepared to take the time necessary to ensure that the Relocation Assistance Program is explained in a manner that the displacee understands.

The relocation advisor also needs to receive information from the displacee in order to ascertain their needs and desires and must be skillful in seeking this information. This is accomplished by explaining why the information is needed and by providing assurance to the displacee that the information gathered is confidential.

The advisor is expected to gather the information necessary to complete the Residential Relocation Subject Inspection Sheet. This information will become the basis for completing moving estimates, comparable housing studies and finally the Offer of Relocation presented to the displacee.

RESIDENTIAL MOVING EXPENSE PAYMENTS

GENERAL

Residential moving expense payments are designed to compensate a person for moving and related expenses which are incurred as a result of having to move from his or her dwelling or to move personal property as a result of the project. They include items such as the cost of packing,

transporting and unpacking household goods, the cost of storage, if necessary, and other related costs.

Reimbursement of expenses is limited to one move if a second, or split move is voluntary. Payment is limited to the reasonable and necessary expenses that would have been incurred had the displacee moved only once.

In the event that comparable replacement housing has not been made available but it is necessary to require the person to move for a highly extraordinary reason, a second or split move is not considered to be voluntary and all reasonable and necessary expenses will be reimbursed.

Reasonable and necessary expenses incurred by a person who elected to move to a replacement dwelling that is not decent, safe and sanitary (DSS) can be paid or reimbursed. No requirement exists that a person move to a DSS replacement dwelling in order to receive reimbursement or payment for moving expenses.

These residential moving costs may be computed in three ways, the actual cost method, the schedule method or a self move . A self move is performed by the displaced person in one or a combination of actual and fixed scheduled move. Self-moves based upon the lower of two bids or estimates are not eligible for reimbursement under this section.

ACTUAL COST METHOD

Any owner or tenant-occupant of a dwelling who qualifies as a displaced person is entitled to payment or reimbursement of those actual and reasonable expenses that the Iowa Department of Transportation determines to be necessary for a successful move. Eligible expenses include:

1. Transportation of the displaced person and the person's personal property for a distance not to exceed 50 miles.
2. Packing, crating, unpacking and uncrating of the personal property.
3. Disconnecting, dismantling, removing, reassembling and reinstalling relocated household appliances and other personal property.
4. Storage of the personal property for a period not to exceed 12 months. The boarding of animals is not considered to be storage. The storage location cannot be a site in which the displacee has an ownership or tenant interest.

The 12 month limitation can be waived in extraordinary circumstances. In those instances, the Relocation Supervisor will be consulted for approval.

5. Insurance for the replacement value of the personal property to be moved. This can be during the move and for any storage period determined to be necessary.

6. The replacement value of personal property lost, stolen or damaged when insurance covering such loss is not reasonably available. If the loss is through the fault or negligence of the displacee, or his or her agent or employee, reimbursement for the loss will not be allowed.
7. Reimbursement for other expenses not listed later as ineligible, may be available. If the relocation advisor believes a displacee has or will incur such an expense, the Relocation Supervisor will be consulted.

It is the responsibility of the relocation advisor to make arrangements to obtain a binding moving bid from a competent mover in the general vicinity of the displaced property, if possible. It is preferable to obtain at least two bids. The relocation advisor should be present during the movers' inspections in order to clarify the items to be moved and any special handling, if required.

The relocation advisor will negotiate a reasonable amount to be paid for the bid with instructions to the mover that the bid is for the exclusive use of the Iowa Department of Transportation. All bids should be in writing and provide a reasonable breakdown of the specific costs and special handling requirements, if necessary, noted on the binding estimate.

The relocation advisor will review the estimates to insure completeness and inventory consistency. This is especially critical if there is a large disparity between estimates. If there is a substantial difference between estimates, the relocation advisor should attempt to resolve them. It is reasonable to assume that two competent, knowledgeable companies moving the same inventory the same distance should be reasonably close in their estimate. If they are not, and the difference cannot be resolved, the relocation advisor should obtain an estimate from a third party to assist in providing a sound basis for the cost of the move.

While there is no fixed dollar ceiling on payments for actual moving expenses, there are limits on what may be paid:

1. The payment may not exceed the actual cost of the moving and related expenses, and will be based on receipts for the costs claimed.
2. The charges which make up the payment must be reasonable, i.e., typical of the amounts charged for a similar move.
3. The items of cost included in the claim for reimbursement must be necessary to accomplish the move.
4. Payment for the move is limited to the low acceptable bid.

When making determinations of reasonableness and necessity, the relocation advisor should use common sense and good judgment.

In order to minimize or eliminate hardships, the displacee may request that the vendor be paid directly. The relocation advisor will arrange for such payments and complete an Assignment of Interest form to be signed by the displacee.

SCHEDULE METHOD

Any person displaced from a dwelling or seasonal residence may choose to receive an expense and dislocation allowance as an alternative to actual expenses. This schedule or fixed method is based on the number of rooms of furniture in the dwelling from which the move occurred.

The advantages of this method are:

1. It minimizes record keeping and paperwork for both the displacee and Iowa Department of Transportation.
2. It is clear, simple and easy to administer.
3. The displacee knows in advance the amount he or she will be paid and can plan accordingly.
4. Claims for payment can be processed in advance of the physical move and payment to the displacee can be made immediately upon satisfactory vacation of the premises.

This fixed or schedule payment, established by the Iowa Department of Transportation, is composed of two parts.

1. The number of rooms of furniture and/or possessions. Typically, bathrooms are not included.

The relocation advisor may adjust the room count where such an adjustment is felt to be reasonable. Examples of this include: rooms with substantially more than the typical amount of possessions may be counted as two or more rooms; basement areas, small storage sheds or garages may be counted as rooms; and, miscellaneous exterior personal property may be considered as a room.

2. A dislocation allowance. This allowance is intended as reimbursement for various incidental costs such as reinstallation of telephones, utility hookups, cable hookups, etc.

The relocation advisor should be aware of these costs in the displacee's locality and share this information with the displacee. This will enable the displacee to make an educated decision as to whether the fixed or schedule payment is suited to their needs.

The current payment schedule is located in the Appendix.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Packing/Unpacking Allowance - This is an additional payment to reimburse the residential displacee for their time in packing and/or unpacking their personal property regardless of whether the displacee elected to use a commercial mover or the schedule move. There are many times special items of personalty that the displacee elects to move themselves and it is reasonable to allow a reasonable payment for their time.

Payment of these packing and/or unpacking expenses is \$250 for a room count (see SCHEDULE METHOD, previous section) of eight rooms or less, with an additional payment of \$25 per room above that.

In those cases where the displacee is elderly, has special needs or cannot physically perform the task, the relocation advisor will obtain estimates and payment will be made on an actual cost basis.

More Than One Family or Individual Living In a Home - If two or more individuals live together and must move as a result of the project, and they elect to move to separate replacement housing, each is entitled to a prorated share of the moving payment that would have been made if they had moved together to one replacement dwelling. The relocation advisor can usually facilitate an agreement between the parties as to how much each should receive.

If, in the relocation advisor's judgment, the occupants are maintaining distinct and separate households that happen to be under one roof, it is not necessary to prorate. Each can receive separate payments based on the rooms of possessions that each occupies in the dwelling.

Remove All Personal Property - Displacees will move or dispose of all personal property prior to receipt of the moving payment or reimbursement, and the possession warrant, held and released, generally, by Property Management. The intent is not to be picky, but to ensure that significant items of personal property and any quantities of unwanted or discarded materials that are significant enough to attract rodents or other pests are removed.

Hazardous or Toxic Household Materials - Displacees are encouraged to properly dispose of unwanted household materials that are considered to be toxic or hazardous. The Iowa Department of Natural Resources publishes a pamphlet "Home Sweet Hazards" that describes these materials and contains suggestions on substitutions, uses and disposal of such substances. The relocation advisor should include a copy of this pamphlet in the packet of materials presented to displacees.

During the relocation advisor's inspection of the property to be acquired, these items should be noted and pointed out to the displacee to put them on alert to the special disposal procedures.

Examples include: insecticides, rodent killers, fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, brush cleaners, paint strippers, photographic chemicals, wood preservatives, parts cleaners, oil-based paints, varnishes, thinners, turpentine, antifreeze, motor oil, degreasers, transmission fluid, lead-acid batteries, gasoline, radiator flushes, rust preventatives, oven cleaners, furniture and other polishes, deodorizers, mothballs/flakes, spot removers, floor waxes, drain cleaners, aerosol cans and other non-biodegradable items.

Many times, the displacees aren't even aware of these potentially dangerous items, and it can be expensive to dispose of these materials properly and responsibly. The Iowa Department of Transportation has an obligation to attempt to educate our displacees and encourage them to protect our environment. In order to do this, we will reimburse the actual and reasonable cost to dispose of these materials.

Such reimbursement will be provided to all displacees whether they move on an actual cost or schedule basis.

Miscellaneous Exterior Personal Property - Many properties have other items of personal property outside the dwelling which will need to be moved. These items may include satellite systems, liquid propane tanks, ornamental displays, portable clothesline poles, swing sets, swimming pools, etc.

Because it can be costly to disconnect, move and reconnect many of these items, the displacee may be forced to move using the actual cost basis even though they would prefer to use the schedule move.

In these cases it is more cost effective to reimburse the move of these items on an actual cost basis in addition to a schedule move for the household items. The relocation advisor is cautioned not to include additional room count for these items if the displacee chooses this option.

A separate offer for a personal property move should be requested by the relocation advisor.

Direct Payments - In order to minimize or eliminate a hardship, the displacee may request that the vendor be paid directly. The relocation advisor can arrange for such payments. The displacee may assign payments to movers and other vendors providing services required by the move. The Assignment of Interest form should be used.

If the vendor has an outstanding lien with the State of Iowa, the Iowa Department of Revenue may attach any payments to satisfy said lien. When this occurs it is important that the relocation advisor notify both the displacee and vendor that this has happened. Neither the displacee nor the Iowa Department of Transportation will be required to make additional payments to the vendor.

Transfer of Ownership - Upon request, the displacee will transfer ownership (relinquish rights) of any personal property not moved, sold or traded in, to the Iowa Department of Transportation. Usually this will be in the form of a Letter of Understanding.

INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

None of the following expenses are considered to be eligible for reimbursement as residential moving and related expenses.

1. The cost of moving any structure or real property improvement in which the displacee reserved ownership. However, this cost is an eligible expense if the displacee reserves ownership, moves it from the displacement site, re-occupies it on a replacement site and it meets DSS criteria.
2. Interest on a loan to cover moving expenses.
3. Personal injury.
4. Legal or other costs of preparing a claim for a relocation payment, or for representing the displacee with the Iowa Department of Transportation.
5. Expenses of searching for a replacement dwelling.
6. Expenses for storage of personal property at a location where the displacee has an ownership or tenant interest.

REPLACEMENT HOUSING PAYMENTS (RHP)

GENERAL

In addition to the moving payment expenses discussed earlier, another set of payments are provided for persons displaced from their homes by our projects. These Replacement Housing Payments (RHP) are designed to help eligible displaced persons to move into housing which is decent, safe and sanitary (DSS), adequate for their needs and comparable to what they had before the project required their move. These payments are available to residential displaced persons only.

There are three categories of RHPs: Purchase Supplements, Rental Assistance and Downpayment Assistance. Sometimes even these payments are not sufficient to meet the objectives of the law and regulations and it is necessary to provide last resort housing payments and/or procedures.

All Replacement Housing Payment categories have specific requirements for eligibility and computation. However, all have a number of features in common.

1. **Occupancy** - Payments may only be made to occupants of the dwelling. This means that the dwelling is their usual place of residency or abode. Summer homes are not considered primary residences.