



global talent mobility survey 2024

defense: industry trends summary



Our [Global Talent Mobility Survey Report 2024](#) is a comprehensive exploration into the dynamic intersection of macro-economic challenges, employee experience, and the ever-evolving landscape of global mobility strategies. With the [final report](#) out now, we have taken a deep dive into specific industries—including Defense—to see what the data tells us.

FOLLOWING ARE KEY FINDINGS FROM OUR 20 DEFENSE* RESPONDENTS:

mobility volume

When looking at annual **domestic (intra-country)**, non-US move volume among respondents from the Defense industry, they have a higher percentage of respondents who reported more than 1,000 moves (15%) than the full report (4%). The sector also has slightly lower percentages of respondents who reported 100 to 500 moves (20% vs 27%).

Half of the Defense respondents (50%) have less than 100 employees on **international (cross-border only)** assignments, which is lower than the full report (66%). Interestingly, Defense respondents are also twice as likely as those in the full report to have more than 1,000 employees on cross-border assignments (10% vs. 5%).

The data shows that the Defense industry has experienced more fluctuations in its mobility activity over the past two years than the overall survey population. Although 45% of Defense respondents indicated that their mobility activity has increased over the past two years, a figure nearly identical to the general survey results (44%), 40% of Defense respondents noted a decrease in activity, compared to 30% in the general survey findings. Only 15% reported no change, suggesting the Defense industry has faced more challenges and opportunities in its mobility programs than other industries.

*Defense-related respondents represent a spectrum of industries ranging from traditionally categorized defense contractors to defense-related or -supporting companies in the aerospace, engineering, manufacturing, technology, energy, and other sectors.



drivers for increasing volume

The top two factors that played a significant role in increasing mobility activity over the past two years are talent not available locally and company growth, both at 19%. These factors are also the top two for the full report average, but at much higher rates (56% and 52%, respectively).

drivers for decreasing volume

The top factor that played a significant role in decreasing mobility activity in the Defense sector was cost containment strategy at 36%, followed by negative company growth (21%). This factor is also the top one for the full report average, but at a much higher rate (70%).

anticipated move-types for 2024

- 1 Intra-country moves – 15%
- 2 International long-term assignments – 13%
- 3 International short-term assignments / business traveler – 12%

Some additional insights from the data:

- Half of respondents in this sector considered lump sum moves as a priority for their mobility programs.
- Most of the respondents (85%) were not interested in a "technology-only" solution for any of their mobility populations. This reflects a clear preference for a human touch and a trusted expert in the field, rather than relying solely on technology.

Given lump sum-only moves are typically a do-it-yourself option, an interesting contradiction begins to appear when comparing these two previous stats (50% consider lump sum moves a priority and 85% do not want a tech-only solution). It may indicate many in the Defense sector prefer managed lump sum moves with some benefits offered to relocating employees.

The results show that the Defense industry segment faces significant challenges in meeting the expectations of their relocating employees, who may have diverse and evolving needs and preferences regarding their relocation packages, support services, and career development.

The Defense segment also reports a lack of in-house resources, such as staff, budget, and technology, to effectively manage and optimize their global mobility programs. The full report results reveal that rising mobility costs are the top challenge for the overall global mobility community, as they seek to balance the cost-effectiveness and quality of their global mobility programs.



mobility priorities vs. challenges

2024 mobility PRIORITIES	
defense industry	full report
1 improve in-house mobility processes and optimization	1 improve in-house mobility processes and optimization
2 improve the employee experience	2 improve the employee experience
3 review or redesign mobility policy	3 a more flexible approach to mobility (e.g., core/flex, tiered policy)

2024 mobility CHALLENGES	
defense industry	full report
1 meeting relocating employee expectations	1 rising mobility costs
2 tax and compliance	2 meeting relocating employee expectations
3 lack of in-house resources	3 achieving a more flexible approach AND tax and compliance

Notably, but not surprisingly due to FAR (Federal Acquisition Regulation) guidelines, flexible mobility is not among the top three priorities or challenges for Defense sector respondents, though it appears in our overall survey's top results. While the complete report highlights adopting flexibility in global mobility as the third key priority and challenge for 2024, Defense respondents rank it as their sixth priority and fourth biggest challenge. The rising expectation for flexibility and choice among employees and employers' focus on improving the employee experience seems to have prompted the Defense industry to enhance flexibility within FAR. However,

our survey reveals ongoing tension, with the sector facing larger priorities and challenges.

These specific requirements, guidelines, and parameters set by FAR significantly influence the support that Defense industry companies can provide to their relocating employees. This is why it may be deemed essential for in-house Mobility teams to participate in new project negotiations. Their involvement ensures the company can align its competitive bid with the business' overall talent management strategy, helping to successfully complete projects on time and within budget.

cost management

Cost control was a major concern for most companies in this industry. More than half (55%) of respondents said their organization's focus on cost control has remained the same this year compared to the previous two years. However, 40% said that their organization's focus on cost control has increased in this time. This was lower than the full survey, where half of respondents had seen a rise in their organization's focus on cost control.

The respondents suggested the following ways to achieve cost savings in their global mobility programs:

- Administrative process improvements
- Restructuring or redesigning policy
- External provider changes/renegotiations

policy review and redesign

One of the topics covered in the survey was the frequency and intention of policy review and redesign among different industries. The data shows that the Defense industry tends to review its mobility policies significantly more often than the average of the full report, with 60% of Defense respondents indicating that they review their policies every one to two years, compared to 45% of full report respondents. However, the Defense industry is slightly less likely to consider a policy review in 2024, with 55% answering "yes," versus 62% of full report respondents.

The main factors that motivate the respondents to review or redesign their policies are:

17% employee experience

15% flexibility

14% decreased mobility activity

hybrid, extended business travel, and remote worker moves

What do we mean by Extended Business Travel (EBT), hybrid, or remote moves?

- **Extended Business Travel (EBT):** Business-initiated request for the employee to work from a different business location for a defined period (e.g., employee travels from the UK to France to work from their Paris office for an extended period, typically 30 to 90 days).
- **Hybrid:** Employees work partly at home and partly in the physical office, 1-2 days a week.
- **Remote work:** Employee-initiated request to work from a location that is different from their permanent residence for a defined period (e.g., an employee based in the US wants to work from Spain for two months during the summer).
- **Work from home:** Everyone works at their place of residence.

Just under two thirds of respondents (65%) have international remote workers, slightly higher than the 57% who indicated as much in the full report. Most Defense respondents (80%) offered no company-sponsored benefits to these employees. Most of the remaining companies who do offer benefits provide compliance support and immigration services.



intra-country moves

It is noteworthy that the Defense sector has a much higher percentage of intra-country moves than all industries surveyed, with 95% of respondents reporting such moves compared to 80% in the full report. Moreover, the Defense sector reported a different pattern of administration, as two thirds of respondents stated that intra-country assignments were centralized with the global mobility function, compared to only 49% identified in the full report.

Conversely, 32% of respondents in the Defense sector stated that these move-types were handled by local entities, and another 32% reported using a blend of both local and global mobility management. In comparison, the general survey showed 26% and 25%, respectively.

international compensation services

One of the questions that the survey asked was how international assignment compensation services are administered. The results showed that the Defense industry has a more balanced approach than the overall sample, with 30% of respondents using a relocation management company and another 30% managing the services in-house. In contrast, the full report revealed that 42% of respondents across all industries prefer to manage things in-house, while 31% rely on a relocation management company.

The survey also inquired about who provides tax gross-ups for the international mobility program. The Defense industry showed a slightly higher preference for using a tax provider (50%) or a relocation management company (30%) than the full report sample, where 43% use a tax provider, and an additional third manage the tax gross-ups in-house. These findings suggest that the Defense industry has a more outsourced model for managing the compensation and tax aspects of their international assignments than the average respondent, which may be due to the fact that this industry appears to have larger assignee populations than the average HR/mobility professional.

flexible mobility

When discussing demand for more flexibility in mobility programs, Defense respondents were almost evenly split as half reported a rise and 45% indicated demand remained the same. This was slightly down from the full report, as 65% said they had seen an increase in demand for greater mobility flexibility.

Key drivers for such an approach in the Defense sector included:

- Changing employee needs – 26%
- Changing employee expectations – 23%
- Budget constraints and macro-economic environmental pressures AND Talent attraction – 13%

“ [We are] thinking of shifting to core/flex with points and employee choice.”

- 2024 Cartus survey respondent (Defense sector)



“ [It is] very important to increase annual supplier diversity spend.” - 2024 Cartus survey respondent (Defense sector)

mobility DEI

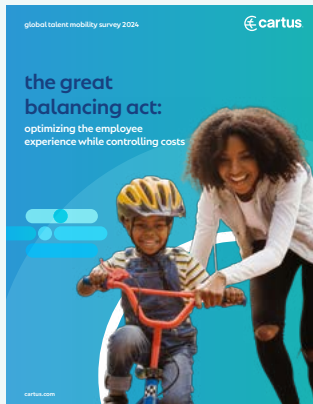
Cartus data reveals the varying degrees of progress that respondents have made in aligning their global mobility programs with their organization's diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) priorities.

- Making progress – 35%
- Leaders in the space – 30%

Encouragingly, a significantly higher number of Defense respondents identified as leaders in the DEI mobility space compared to the overall survey, where just 12% indicated so. A fifth of respondents, however, stated that their current global mobility focus does not include any alignment with their organization's DEI priorities. This percentage is slightly higher than the 17% that gave the same response in the full.

sustainability

When it comes to sustainability, Defense industry respondents are ahead of our overall survey results as three quarters reported that their organization has a corporate sustainability strategy that encompasses the entire business and its supply chain. This is nine percentage points higher than the full survey.



read our full report!

Drawing global insights from 138 respondents across diverse industries, our **Global Talent Mobility Survey Report 2024** unravels the intricate balancing act of dichotomies that define the current corporate relocation landscape. Themes emerging from the data highlight an unwavering focus on employee experience and cost-effectiveness. Striking a delicate balance between these two imperatives requires innovative (and often flexible) mobility policies. Other dualities facing HR and mobility professionals include the need for a human touch against a backdrop of rapid technological advancement. As artificial intelligence (AI) evolves at lightning speed, the timeless necessity for an empathetic (and human) guide and advocate persists.

Pressed for time? Catch the survey highlight reel [here](#).

