

Advisor Checklist

Clients Relocating Internationally: U.S. Tax Issues to Flag Early

Use this one-page guide to spot cross-border tax issues early, ask better questions, and coordinate with the right professionals before problems become expensive.

1. Basic facts to confirm

- Where is the client moving from and to, and when?
- Is the move temporary, open-ended, or permanent?
- Is the client a U.S. citizen, green card holder, dual citizen, or visa holder?
- Will the spouse or children remain in the U.S.?
- Will the client keep a U.S. home, address, or strong state ties?

2. Foreign accounts and assets

- Foreign checking, savings, payroll, or joint accounts
- Foreign investment or brokerage accounts
- Signature authority over foreign accounts
- Foreign retirement or pension accounts
- Foreign business ownership interests or inherited assets

3. Investments and retirement plans

- Plans to invest through a foreign bank or advisor
- Foreign mutual funds or pooled investments
- Participation in a foreign employer retirement plan
- Existing foreign pensions from prior work abroad

4. Income sources to review

- Wages or self-employment income abroad
- Foreign rental, dividend, or interest income
- Equity compensation, bonuses, or deferred compensation
- Business income or pension distributions from abroad

5. Timing issues to discuss

- Bonus payments and stock vesting
- Asset sales and business transactions
- Retirement distributions
- Changes in filing status or residency
- State tax exposure before departure or after return

6. Common red flags

- "I opened a local bank account overseas."
- "I joined my employer's retirement plan abroad."
- "I bought a mutual fund in my new country."
- "I still own part of my family's business overseas."
- "My foreign preparer handled it."

7. When to involve a specialist

- Foreign accounts, investments, or pensions
- Ownership in a foreign business
- Dual-residency or treaty questions
- Prior missed foreign reporting
- Major income timing events tied to the move

Coordination map

Advisor: issue spotting, client communication, timing awareness, and coordination | **CPA / international tax specialist:** analysis, planning, and U.S. reporting | **Foreign tax professional:** local-country compliance | **Legal / immigration / estate counsel:** visa, residency, trusts, inheritances, and family ownership structures as needed

Key takeaway: You do not need to master every international tax form. The real value is recognizing the issue early, asking the right questions, and getting the right professionals involved before mistakes become expensive.