

FACT FINDING TRIP

by Steven Wisensale
University of Connecticut

The purpose of this assignment is threefold. One, to focus on a particular social problem that is confronting the U.S. at present. Two, to apply some of the planning tools we have learned so far in the course. And three, to cultivate your interpersonal skills by dividing you into teams of 5 students each and leaving it up to you as to how to divide responsibilities. Both your topic and your group will be assigned randomly. The assignment will be due the last week of classes.

Trip 1: Indian Reservations in the U.S.

Your fact-finding trip will focus on Indian reservations in the West and Southwest United States. Assume you are being visited by six people from Europe (all speak English) who want to learn more about our Indian reservations. I know there are at least two reservations in South Dakota, one in Idaho, and two or three in Arizona and New Mexico. You need to do the following:

1. Select 3 reservations that include at least two states.
2. Assume your group of six lands in New York
3. You need to fly somewhere (get costs x 7, counting you, return trip)
4. Need to rent a van when you arrive
5. Need to map out your trip by road (use hi-liter on a road map) and total your road miles. Indicate on the map day 1 miles, day 2, day 3, etc.
6. Need to get cost of van rental for 8 day trip
7. Need to decide where to stay each night and what the cost will be
8. Prepare a one-page fact sheet for each reservation that gives basic demographic information, size of the reservations, any health and income information, number of schools, health centers, social problems etc. These three fact sheets will be given to each of your six people as you enter each reservation. Do these reservations have Web sites? If so, print out their main page (just one sheet) for each one and staple to the back of each of your fact sheet.
9. Write up a short report (2 pages typed double spaced) of what you learned from this exercise.
10. Your budget:
 - Plane trip west roundtrip
 - Van rental cost
 - Lodging costs (single rooms only) Motel 6 is ok
 - Meals
 - Small going away gifts for guests (no smiley buttons)

Trip 2: Models of Summer Camps in the Northeast/New England

1. Assume a group of six people from Austria will be flying into Bradley airport. They all speak English.
2. Their particular interest and your expertise is summer camps
3. Go to this Web site: <http://www.summercamp.org/guidance/pamphlet.html>
4. Your trip will be in a van and you are limited to the greater Northeast. You can narrow it to the 6 states of New England if you wish.

5. You want to select 7 different types of camps for them to visit - one camp per day for this 7 day driving trip. The “different types” must include at least two “special needs” camps and at least 5 overnight camps.
6. You will need to locate on a map where each camp is located (include the map when you turn in this assignment) and then with a hi-liter you need to map out your route for day 1, day 2, day 3 etc.
7. Need to total your road miles.
8. Need to find lodging for a reasonable cost for 7 people (including you) all single rooms. Motel 6 is ok, but avoid flea bag hotels!
9. For each camp you visit you will need to prepare a fact sheet (7 in all) that you will give to each person as you visit each camp. Includes location, facilities, capacity, activities, age range, special needs etc. cost etc.
10. Need to figure your food budget - 3 meals a day, 7 days
11. Need to write up a short 2-page report explaining what you learned from this exercise.
12. If a camp has a web page (all probably will) print out first page of each and attach to item #12 above.
13. Need to prepare a budget page that includes:
 - Plane trip west roundtrip
 - Van rental cost
 - Lodging costs (single rooms only) Motel 6 is ok
 - Meals
 - Small going away gifts for guests (no smiley buttons)

Trip 3: Children’s Hospitals

Your fact-finding trip will focus on children’s hospitals in the greater Northeast. It can be limited to New England if you find enough. Assume you are being visited by six people from Venezuela (they all speak English) who want to learn more about our children’s hospitals here in the U.S. You need not worry about plane travel, all trips will be in a van that you need to rent.

1. Select 6 children’s hospitals in the Northeast/New England region. that you think are very representative of what we have to offer in the U.S. You will need to go to various web sites and do some exploring.
2. You will need to rent a van for 7 days. What’s the cost?
3. Need to locate on a map the hospitals you want to visit, the mileage between each one, and then hi-lite your trip on a map with a hi-liter. Include map when you submit your final report.
4. Need to decide where to stay each night and what the cost of lodging will be. Everyone, including you, will have a single room. Motel 6 is ok.
5. Prepare a one page fact sheet/descriptive information flier that will be given to your guests as you visit each hospital. Need to include information such as size of the hospital (# of beds), special services they offer, is the hospital private or public, costs per stay (if you can find it), services for families (is there a Ronald McDonald House nearby or something similar for parents).
6. If possible, try to find different types of children’s hospitals - such as one that may specialize in burns, one that specializes in cancer, one that specializes in particular debilitating illnesses or diseases.
7. Assuming the children’s hospitals you selected each has a Web page, print out the first page and attach to item #8 below.
8. Write up a short report (2 pages typed double spaced) of what you learned from the exercise.

9. Need to prepare a budget page that includes:
 - Van rental cost
 - Lodging costs (single rooms only) Motel 6 is ok
 - Meals
 - Small going away gifts for guests (no smiley buttons)

Trip 4: California Prison System

Assume you will be meeting six people in Los Angeles. All six are from Colombia and are interested in learning more about the U.S. prison system. Your assignment is to rent a van and drive California over a 7-day period in which you must visit 6 different prisons in California. Keep in mind you will want to show your guests a variety of 3 prisons, including facilities for hardened criminals (maximum security), minimum security prisons, prisons for women, facilities for youth etc. Follow the steps below.

1. Select your six prisons. You can go on the web and find the locations of all the prisons in California and then learn something about each one.
2. Remember you have 7 days to travel about and you want to spend about a day (perhaps 5-6 hours) at each prison. Your travel time will be in the evening and at night and then some in the morning. California is a big state so you need to be efficient.
3. Identify your prisons that you think are very representative of our prison system in the U.S. as a whole, locate them on a map, and then hi-lite your trip on a map (include miles in between) that you will turn in with your assignment.
4. Need to find the cost for the van rental.
5. Need to decide where to stay each night. Motel 6 is ok. What is the cost? All six of your visitors and you will stay in a single room.
6. Prepare a one-page fact sheet that you would give to your guests as you visit each prison. What is the size, what types of prisoners does it hold, any information about the facility in terms of its age, or design, or special facilities etc. Also, any statistics you can gather on the recidivism rate (# of repeat offenders etc.) would. Try to get some facts, numbers, on the total number of prisoners in California and then how many are in maximum security, how many in minimum security, how many women, juveniles etc. If each prison has its own web site, print out the first page and attach to # 7 below.
7. Write up a short report (2 pages typed double spaced) of what you learned from this assignment.
8. Need to prepare a budget page that includes:
 - Van rental cost
 - Lodging costs (single rooms only) Motel 6 is ok
 - Meals
 - Small going away gifts for guests (no smiley buttons)

Trip 5: Homeless Shelters in Connecticut

Assume you are going to be visited by six people from Arkansas who are interested in looking at homeless shelters in Connecticut. You will need to get a list of the homeless shelters we have. I suggest you first try the Department of Social Services in Hartford and get a list. When you have the list, try to determine if there are different types of models of shelters. For example, are they privately or publicly funded? Are there some for families, or single parents with children, or some for people with special needs etc. Then do the following.

1. Take a map of Connecticut and mark on the map where a homeless shelter is located. How many are there and are they concentrated in certain sections of the state?

2. Find out as much as you can about the shelters in terms of the number of people they can serve and the different types of homeless they will serve.
3. Find what you can about the different rules and regulations each shelter may have compared to the others. For example, do they have time limits on stays.
4. Find what you can about any services they may offer their clients.
5. Then select six representative samples in the state (call them models) that you would like to show to your six visitors from Arkansas. These six shelters should be “our best” - or as “best” a homeless shelter can be.
6. Locate them on a map.
7. Rent a van and get the cost of the van for a journey of 5 days around the state of Connecticut to visit the shelters.
8. Need to decide where you will stay (lodging cost) and what it will cost. All of you will stay in single rooms. Motel 6 is ok.
9. Prepare a one page fact sheet for each homeless shelter you selected - include any information such as the number of clients it serves, # of beds, its costs, how funded, the size of staff, how many volunteers etc.
10. Write up a short report (2 pages typed double spaced) of what you learned from this exercise.
11. Need to prepare a budget page that includes:
 - Van rental cost
 - Lodging costs (single rooms only) Motel 6 is ok
 - Meals
 - Small going away gifts for guests (no smiley buttons)

You will also need to include in your packet that you turn in the map you used (fully highlighted) that shows your trip mapped out. Show/indicate on the map which direction you are going and number your stops, label your shelter you are visiting, and indicate the number of miles between each stop.

Teaching Note

This major project for a course in planning human services may work best if two things happen. One, the students are assigned to groups randomly. And two, the information gathered be shared with the class. This latter objective can be accomplished to some degree by assigning to discussion groups, making sure that no students from the same working group participate in the discussion. Each discussion group of 5 students should contain one representative from each working group.