

Things you need to know before you go;

- Bring a hat or lapel pin for the house keepers, they can't be tipped directly due to IRS laws so they've decided to collect pins from students and the more they have the more status amongst themselves so bring a lapel, hat or other pin referencing your state or agency or hometown.
- If you are a non-smoker, please be prepared for a slightly smoke smelling room. Some rooms are previously for smokers. They also allow smoking on the balconies and that allows smoke into the room despite the best efforts of the residents.
- The food at the Center is both copious and delicious! Plan for walking, swimming or something. By the end of the week, we were asking for very small portions, and considering skipping a meal.
- The phone number for the travel agent is; Metropolitan Travel 800-662-6363 9-5 EST. They will contact you prior to your required flight day. If you desire it you can fly on a different date both coming and going as long as the destination inbound isn't too far off, Florida would be too far I think, as long as you make the class on Sunday you'll be good but if you miss it then you're liable for the cost of the flight. We generally fly into Baltimore, rent a car there and drive to Buffalo New York and visit family for a few days and then just drive back to the Baltimore airport to catch the shuttle bus to the center.
- You can bring a spouse/significant other but their plane fare is up to you. Metropolitan can get a very good deal so I'd suggest using them for their ticket. As it states in the form from the center their lodging costs are 35 a night and I think they only take cash or a check. They should be prepared for you to be in class all day and have, depending on the course, some after class work most days. There is Wi-Fi and several activities like a pool and a spa, the bay and a walking path in the woods, golf and a bike loan shop.
- When you arrive at the airport, you will go to baggage claim. After collecting your bag's the easiest approach is to go towards the USO. Very near the entrance to the USO is an exit from the building. After you go out the doors, you cross only one street to the next sidewalk. Stop there and wait for the van that is very clearly marked with IAM logo's and flag it down. He makes trips through the area based on your arrival time (listed by the travel agent) so if you were delayed you may need to call him. His name is Matt and his

number is 301-997-8839. Alternatively, if he's no longer the driver you can call the center at 301-373-3300 and get the number for his replacement (he's threatened to retire every time I've seen him for the last several years).

- The shuttle will then take you to a big office looking building, inside is a small but well stocked waiting area where all the others will gather for the bus ride to the Center. It only has one TV so bring something to do or read while waiting for the bus to arrive. There is a gas station nearby with a small selection of drinks and food. Pizza and gas station food but more than is available at the waiting area. You won't be able to get anything to eat until the next day so I'd suggest eating something while there, as they don't allow food in the rooms.
- While at the office building, please stack your luggage in the hallway. When the bus is ready to load, you'll take it out to the bus. The driver is the only one there to load it onto the bus so if you are able, please help him load it ☺
- The bus ride from the airport is very long, 2 hours, and most or part of it will be made in the dark (winter hours only). The bus has a TV but the channel reception is poor so bring something to do or read during the wait at the terminal and on the bus.
- At the center, the rooms are dorm style and more often than not have no soap or shampoo so please plan to bring your own. The water there is very hot and is softened so be prepared for that as well. Due to TSA restrictions, we opted for the travel size of both. There is Wi-Fi available but depending on your carrier, cell reception may be intermittent. You will spend the majority of your time in class or meetings so don't pack like you're going camping ☺ There is no dress code, casual is the order of the day, but the mix of attendees' is widely varied so some decorum will go a long way ☺
- The beds mattress's are unique in that they squeak, a sound like walking on snow, so be prepared for that as well ☺
- You will need to bring about 100 dollars in cash to cover donations for the agencies that support the center and the Union, your cost to mail any materials home, any trips to town etc.
- When you arrive at the center, you will be filed through the lobby and receive your room key and a welcome packet. Get some rest! You will have plenty of time to read through the packet tomorrow ☺