

AAHOA Statement on Human Trafficking Awareness Program Updates and Enhancements

ATLANTA, Ga., Aug. 26 – In response to a constantly changing landscape around human trafficking prevention in the lodging industry, the Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST) *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training Sponsored by AAHOA* program recently underwent enhancements to content and programming.

The program, which was originally launched with the Washington Hospitality Association in 2012, was developed to share best practices and training for hotel employees to proactively prevent human trafficking. After providing this training to counties across Washington state, AAHOA and BEST formed a partnership to provide the invaluable training online.

In 2016, the *BEST Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training Sponsored by AAHOA* program was launched, which significantly impacted AAHOA's efforts to provide training, education, and awareness to AAHOA Members, who own 60% of the hotels in the country and employ more than 1.1 million staff members.

“Since its launch, the *BEST Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training Sponsored by AAHOA* has provided vital awareness, consultation, and training to AAHOA Members and their staffs,” AAHOA Chair Vinay Patel said. “Because the environment around human trafficking is always changing and evolving, especially in light of the pandemic, it’s important that hoteliers stay up to date on how best to spot the signs and prevent human trafficking.”

The course now focuses on unconscious bias and behavior-based indicators of trafficking to help people identify and assess potential trafficking situations.

Another addition includes information about contactless technologies that many hotels are adopting because of COVID-19. The goal is to help managers use this technology to help them prevent trafficking at their hotels, despite less direct contact with guests.

The program also includes more visual representation of boys and men throughout the course videos, as trafficking doesn't only affect girls and women.

Dr. Mar Brettmann, BEST CEO and Executive Director, said of the new training, “The changes that we made to our *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking* training stem directly from feedback that we received from our partners. The new content highlights diverse narratives and real-life scenarios to help lodging employees learn how to identify potential trafficking cases. We are excited for AAHOA Members to take what they learn from the updated course back to their establishments and help end human trafficking.”

A printable toolkit also is now available to supplement the online training course, which includes indicator lists by lodging function and resource cards for potential trafficking victims. This is an incredible resource managers can post or have available in areas that staff frequent, such as a break room.

“The effort to prevent and end human trafficking remains a huge initiative for AAHOA, and this latest program update goes a long way to ensure that the training is effective and up to date and reflects the current landscape of human trafficking prevention in hospitality,” AAHOA Interim President & CEO Ken Greene said. “We’ve done a great job being leaders in the industry with lawmakers, with other stakeholders, and with our members and owners to make sure we’re doing our part to end human trafficking in the most effective and best way possible.”

The *BEST Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training Sponsored by AAHOA* program is an exclusive AAHOA Member benefit, so all members and their employees can take this training for FREE online, 24/7/365. To learn more, visit AAHOA.com/HTAT.

About AAHOA

AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world. The nearly 20,000 AAHOA Members own 60 percent of hotels in the United States, representing more than 3.1 million guestrooms. With billions of dollars in property assets and more than one million employees, AAHOA Members are core economic contributors in virtually every community. AAHOA is a proud defender of free enterprise and the foremost current-day example of realizing the American Dream.

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