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Human Trafficking Training Available to Help Hotel Owners and Operators Meet New State Mandate

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., Nov. 17 – In an effort to crack down on human trafficking across Florida, a new law is going into effect mandating that all lodging establishments provide annual human trafficking awareness training for housekeeping and front desk employees. The state will require hotel owners and operators to provide training for new employees within 60 days after they begin employment in a housekeeping or reception area role, or by January 1, 2021, whichever occurs later. Training must be re-administered annually. Businesses that do not comply with this new mandate face a fine of up to \$2,000 a day.

Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST), an industry leader in anti-trafficking education and prevention partnered with AAHOA, the nation’s largest hotel owners association, to offer a 30-minute, online, video-based training for hotel employees. *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training sponsored by AAHOA* helps employees understand and identify the signs of potential trafficking situations in hotels and how they can safely report it.

The Florida Division of Hotels & Restaurants recently certified that *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training sponsored by AAHOA* meets the requirements set forth in section 509.096 of the Florida State Statute as an approved human trafficking awareness training program that lodging establishments can use to satisfy the new state mandate.

The training is available in English or Spanish, and it is proven to increase the reporting of human trafficking incidents. In 2019 researchers from Arizona State University evaluated *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training sponsored by AAHOA* and found that 97 percent of hotel employees who took the training said it will help prevent sex trafficking incidents. 96 percent of employees reported taking at least one recommended step to prevent trafficking at their hotel.

“This training is a wonderful resource for hotel owners and operators to fulfill Florida’s new training requirement,” explains Mar Brettmann, PhD, Founder and CEO of BEST. “Since our training is provided online, it’s easy to administer to employees annually, and it’s convenient for employees to be able to provide their managers with the required documentation showing they are up-to-date with their training.”

Part of Florida's new regulations require each housekeeping or front desk employee to submit a signed and dated acknowledgment of having received training, which the hotel owner or operator must be able to provide to the Department of Business and Professional Regulation upon request. *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training sponsored by AAHOA* will make this step easy for hotel managers and employees because after completing the training, employees can print a signed and dated certificate showing they have completed the course.

Eight states have passed laws requiring human trafficking awareness training for lodging establishments. Florida joins California, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Jersey, Iowa, North Dakota and Illinois in mandating employee training.

"America's hoteliers can be the first line of defense against human trafficking," said AAHOA President & CEO Cecil P. Staton. "With proper training, such as BEST's *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking sponsored by AAHOA*, hotel owners and their employees can learn to identify the signs of trafficking and how to respond to potential trafficking situations. AAHOA is proud to partner with BEST to help bring this valuable training to the nation's hotel owners."

Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training sponsored by AAHOA is available at no cost to AAHOA's 20,000 members and their employees through AAHOA's website (www.AAHOA.com/HTAT) as part of the Association's Human Trafficking Awareness Trainings.

About AAHOA:

AAHOA is the largest hotel owners association in the world. The 20,000 AAHOA members own almost one in every two hotels in the United States. With billions of dollars in property assets and hundreds of thousands of 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.

About Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST):

*Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST) is a Seattle-based nonprofit organization with the mission to align and equip leaders to use the power of business to prevent human trafficking. BEST is the first organization in the country dedicated entirely to working with businesses to disrupt human trafficking. BEST has provided consultation and training to thousands of businesses on how to prevent human trafficking. For more information about ordering *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking* training from BEST, visit bestalliance.org or email info@bestalliance.org.*

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