



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

February 27, 2020

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Hospitality Workers Get New Tool to Help Combat Human Trafficking

Little Rock, AR (February 27, 2020) – The **Arkansas Hospitality Association (AHA)** today announced a new partnership with the nonprofit organization, **Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking (BEST)** that will make BEST’s *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking* training, sponsored by **AAHOA**, available to all of AHA’s members so they can train their staff to spot and report human trafficking. By offering this training and making it available at no cost to all their hotel members, AHA is taking an important step in preventing human trafficking in lodging facilities across Arkansas.

Human trafficking can happen in all communities, but with two major interstate highways, I-40 and I-30, cutting through the state and connecting Fort Worth, Dallas, and Texarkana to Little Rock, these heavily traveled routes run through some of the state’s most populated communities, making these freeways a major corridor for potential human trafficking activity.

“This important human trafficking training is free for our employers and we all need to fight human trafficking. BEST offers this outstanding online training to equip our industry to take action when they suspect a problem. Our partnership with BEST and this training will protect victims and keep your business safe,” said Montine McNulty, CEO for the Arkansas Hospitality Association.

BEST provides expertise in human trafficking prevention, and BEST’s *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking* training helps hotel employees learn the indicators of human trafficking in hotels, and how they can safely report it to law enforcement. By partnering with BEST to offer this valuable training at no cost to their members, the AHA is helping hotels and lodging facilities across Arkansas learn how to help prevent human trafficking at their properties.

Given the transient nature of the hotel industry, with its service-focused culture that respects guest privacy, hotels are often an ideal environment for human traffickers to force their victims to meet buyers. Therefore, it is essential that hotel employees are trained in what to look for—so they can recognize the warning signs of human trafficking.

“Hotel employees are frequently in direct contact with guests throughout their stay, so they work in positions where they are likely to encounter human trafficking victims,” explains Mar Brettmann, CEO of BEST. “That’s why this new partnership is so important. We know that educating hotel employees will

help them know when to report certain behaviors that can indicate human trafficking. This can help recover victims and give them the opportunity to escape their traffickers.”

BEST's *Inhospitable to Human Trafficking* training for hotel employees is a 30-minute, online, video-based training. The training is available in English or Spanish, and it has been proven to increase hotel employee reporting. Researchers from the University of Washington evaluated BEST's hotel training and found that trained employees were more likely to come forward to report human trafficking incidents to their managers. Researchers also learned that 96 percent of hotel employee participants believe that BEST's training made their hotel safer.

As of February 27, 2020, all lodging facilities who are members of AHA will be able to access BEST's training for free through the AHA member website. Hotel staff can take BEST's training as a group, or individual employees can take the training online. AHA is providing this training as a benefit to their members.

"BEST's Inhospitable to Human Trafficking Training sponsored by AAHOA is a vital tool in the fight against trafficking. Hoteliers and their employees can be the first line of defense against trafficking in their communities, but only if they know how to identify and respond to potential situations of human trafficking. Our friends at AHA are taking a critical step in this fight by offering this training to their members. It can help hoteliers protect their guests, their employees, and their businesses, and potentially save lives," said AAHOA President & CEO, Cecil P. Staton.

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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 hundreds of businesses on how to prevent human trafficking. For more information visit bestalliance.org.

About Arkansas Hospitality Association (AHA)

The mission of the Arkansas Hospitality Association (AHA) is to ensure the growth, success, education, and image of the restaurant, lodging, and tourism industries in the State of Arkansas. For more information visit arhospitality.org.