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New Program Helps Connect Survivors of Human Trafficking with Jobs

SEATTLE, Wash. – Businesses Ending Slavery and Trafficking ([BEST](#)) announces a new employment program for survivors of human trafficking in King County. The Safe Jobs Collaborative is the first of its kind program in Washington that specifically helps connect people who have been exploited through human trafficking with employers wanting to offer them jobs, while at the same time providing individualized support to help survivors transition to stable employment.

People who have been exploited through sex trafficking or labor trafficking face obstacles that make getting a job difficult through typical job-readiness programs and application methods. Human trafficking survivors may be missing documents, lacking work experience, or needing more formal education in order to be granted an interview through standard methods of employment. These challenges create a barrier for human trafficking survivors seeking employment.

BEST hosted several focus groups of human trafficking survivors and learned that the number one barrier to being able to escape a life of exploitation was a lack of financial alternatives. Without an achievable path to stable employment, victims of human trafficking often remain vulnerable to repeat the cycle of exploitation. The Safe Jobs Collaborative was created to address this problem by offering a long-term solution to help provide human trafficking survivors with job opportunities in King County and help support survivors and employers throughout the employment process.

"When a person does not have the opportunity to support themselves and their children, they can remain stuck in a terrible situation of exploitation," explains Mar Brettmann, Executive Director for BEST. "The Safe Jobs Collaborative is a group of organizations that directly support trafficking survivors and people at risk of trafficking plus companies committed to empowering survivors by providing employment opportunities. The Collaborative provides a new pipeline to employment."

To date, BEST has been able to partner with eight King County employers who have joined the Safe Jobs Collaborative. More employers will be added to the collaborative as the program continues to grow. BEST developed a specialized training for Safe Jobs employers that instructs managers on how to effectively supervise people who have endured extreme trauma. BEST also offers assistance for employers if they have any questions or need support with challenges that may arise while managing survivors of human trafficking.

Three King County human service agencies have joined the Safe Jobs Collaborative. Real Escape from the Sex Trade (REST), YouthCare, and Nexus Youth and Families are all partners in the collaborative, and BEST plans to expand the program to include more local human service agencies as the program expands. The role of these nonprofit agencies is to provide individual case management for each human trafficking survivor in the Safe Jobs program. They provide wrap-around support services for survivors throughout the application process, interview period, onboarding process, and continue providing counseling support well after survivors gain employment.

This new Safe Jobs Collaborative offers extra assistance for both employers and human trafficking survivors during the employment process and transition to stable work. This gives survivors of human trafficking a much better chance of success in gaining stable employment and offers the best solution for escaping a life of exploitation and abuse.

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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 www.bestalliance.org.