5 RFP Strategies to Combat Human Trafficking

Here are five ways to act on human trafficking concerns in the meetings and events industry.

1. **Ask key questions:** Does your organization incorporate human trafficking awareness in its value statements? If so, what is it you seek from venues in the fight against human trafficking? Defining your organization’s own position/values will go a long way in developing your RFP questions. In addition, does your organization’s position include a “weight factor” for human trafficking in its decision-making process? Many organizations use a matrix formula for evaluating decisions whereby a set of choices is evaluated against a set of criteria. Before one can properly state the RFP questions, one must know what its own organization’s stance is and how they can fairly be evaluated.
2. **Staff training concerns:** Before you begin to develop human trafficking questions to include in your RFP, identify which hotels have anti-human trafficking policies and training for their staff members (and which staff members are trained). Understand that some venue sales staff may not be included in training because the focus is on their security, front desk and housekeeping staff members.
3. **Frame your questions:** Use ECPAT’s [**Training for Hotel Associates**](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ecpatusa.org%2Fhotel-training&data=05%7C01%7C%7C19c1069a5f0746b5e18108da6db41e97%7Ce468147d05464aba972ffcb53b32830e%7C0%7C0%7C637942917630552122%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=RF7lb7Nf3tdh7tyjoBIqDu8u7GkqNxAQGj2BsEvd5nQ%3D&reserved=0), [**Hotel Tools and Resources**](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.ecpatusa.org%2Fblog%2Ftag%2FHotel%2BResources&data=05%7C01%7C%7C19c1069a5f0746b5e18108da6db41e97%7Ce468147d05464aba972ffcb53b32830e%7C0%7C0%7C637942917630552122%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=%2F8KpWrzJt2xB%2BMZvPuDXHMRIx4ZB9mXG4hPhebesHsQ%3D&reserved=0) and [**Hotel Checklist**](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fstatic1.squarespace.com%2Fstatic%2F594970e91b631b3571be12e2%2Ft%2F61ef2bd76f5bae39f56951c8%2F1643064279759%2FAnti-Trafficking%2BHotel%2BChecklist%2B%25281%2529.pdf&data=05%7C01%7C%7C19c1069a5f0746b5e18108da6db41e97%7Ce468147d05464aba972ffcb53b32830e%7C0%7C0%7C637942917630552122%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=7sI13prp1UEd39HqAyjycIiR4cYmYPVCPIoshjAoAY8%3D&reserved=0), as well as [**Department of Homeland Security/Blue Campaign’s Hospitality Toolkit**](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.dhs.gov%2Fblue-campaign%2Fmaterials%2Ftoolkits&data=05%7C01%7C%7C19c1069a5f0746b5e18108da6db41e97%7Ce468147d05464aba972ffcb53b32830e%7C0%7C0%7C637942917630552122%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=uAxMaC%2FoyDzAY24FPz4WPDrbNCs3CRUL03%2BkrA16Pac%3D&reserved=0), to help you frame questions on the scope of human trafficking assessments.
4. **Reassess your RFPs:** Understand that the methods of traffickers are constantly changing and thus, your RFP should be reevaluated from time to time and not become stagnant. For example, if a hotel is using digital keys for your sleeping room, which allows one to check-in virtually and bypass the front desk, do they have security procedures in place to identify potential victims and their traffickers? They may be unable to share actual procedures, but they can answer the questions posed. Another example involves housekeeping training procedures. Traffickers have learned that leaving soiled sheets and trash in the room that has been used for sex exploitation can leave evidence that may lead law enforcement back to the traffickers. Do venues have other methods for identifying, such as cameras that allow them to observe if someone is standing outside a room as a guard? Understand that trafficking does not occur exclusively in lower-end lodging establishments but also in the most exclusive/high-end properties as well.
5. **Stay on point:** Keep your questions simple but pointed and insist that they be answered. At the same time, share with the venue how much weight is given to anti-human trafficking efforts in the evaluation process. This statement ensures the venue that your organization believes that human trafficking issues must be included to combat this ever-growing problem.

Finally, the Polaris Project offers [**free certification training**](https://nam02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fpolarisproject.org%2Ftraining%2F%25C2%25A0&data=05%7C01%7C%7C19c1069a5f0746b5e18108da6db41e97%7Ce468147d05464aba972ffcb53b32830e%7C0%7C0%7C637942917630552122%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWIjoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzIiLCJBTiI6Ik1haWwiLCJXVCI6Mn0%3D%7C3000%7C%7C%7C&sdata=QpBNtTWSdukv%2FyoGGM4YIc%2FYnKdgE3W6mEKdKHtAWOY%3D&reserved=0) for anyone interested in becoming more aware of human trafficking. Consider taking the course and increase your own awareness of a problem that adversely impacts all people—women, men, children and LGBTQ people—in staggering numbers.

See something, say something, do something.