

Choice Hotels International Hosts "SOAR" Seminar to Attract, Mentor and Educate Historically Underrepresented Groups on Their Path to Hotel Ownership

Industry's first and only dedicated development team focused on creating a more inclusive hospitality industry reintroduces program with a new name and hosts second annual HERTels luncheon

NORTH BETHESDA, Md., April 30, 2024 /PRNewswire/ -- Ahead of its 68th Annual Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH), one of the world's largest lodging franchisors, hosted its SOAR (Supporting Ownership Access & Representation) development seminar to reintroduce its program to create hotel ownership opportunities for underrepresented entrepreneurs. During the seminar, Choice reaffirmed its more than twenty-year commitment to making small business ownership a reality for entrepreneurs that are underrepresented as hotel owners and operators including black, Hispanic and native Americans, as well as women and veterans. Today, Choice continues its path towards strengthening the pipeline of female franchisees by hosting the second annual HERTels by Choice Hotels luncheon, a program that empowers female entrepreneurs throughout their ownership journey.

The full day development seminar, attended by prospective and current owners and operators, featured a Q&A with former NFL player and Comfort Inn and Mainstay Suites owner Chinedum Ndukwe; discussions about breaking barriers to entry within the industry; and an evening networking reception.

"As the first hotel company to establish a dedicated development team solely focused on extending the opportunity of hotel ownership to underrepresented populations, the SOAR team will continue to open doors for underrepresented minority entrepreneurs, including women and veterans," said John Lancaster, Vice President, Emerging Markets, Franchise Development and Owner Relations, Choice Hotels International. "For over 20 years, Choice has seen success and the direct impact of this program, having proudly awarded over 370 franchise agreements to diverse participants since the program started."


The SOAR program is hosting its second annual HERTels by Choice Hotels luncheon and seminar this morning at Choice's annual Convention. This event brings together seasoned owners and potential owners for an afternoon of networking, mentorship and conversations around the barriers to entry for women owners in hospitality. In 2023, Choice's Emerging Markets program, now SOAR, awarded nine Black and African American franchise deals and 17 deals through the HERTels program. Since the HERTels program launched in 2021, 80 women have participated in the program leading to 59 new female-owned hotels.

For more information about SOAR, as well as Choice Hotels development opportunities, visit www.choicehotelsdevelopment.com/diversity.

About Choice Hotels®

Choice Hotels International, Inc. (NYSE: CHH) is one of the largest lodging franchisors in the world. The challenger in upscale and a leader in midscale and extended stay, Choice® has over 7,500 hotels, representing more than 630,000 rooms, in 46 countries and territories. A diverse portfolio of 22 brands that range from full-service upper upscale properties to midscale, extended stay and economy enables Choice® to meet travelers' needs in more places and for more occasions while driving more value for franchise owners and shareholders. The award-winning Choice Privileges® rewards program and co-brand credit card options provide members with a fast and easy way to earn reward nights and personalized perks. For more information, visit www.choicehotels.com.

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