

Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami

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Visitor Industry Council (VIC) Gets New Name to Better Reflect its Mission

Newly named Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami to expand its scope

MIAMI – May 7, 2010 - The Board of Directors of the Visitor Industry Human Resource Development Council (VIC) announced today that it has unanimously agreed to change its name to the **Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami (BHI)** along with its mission in order to better align with and reach the population it serves. The organization's new expanded mission will build on the current model of success in order to advance economic participation for African Americans and Blacks of Africa descent by opening doors of opportunity in Greater Miami's Visitors Industry. "With the name change and new strategic approach, the **Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami** is poised to reach the best and brightest talent within the target population it serves and assure them a sustainable future in the local visitor industry," said George Cozonis, Chairman of the Board of Directors. To reach its long term goals as defined in the newly expanded mission and strategic plan, the **Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami** will add comprehensive *Advocacy, Talent Development and Career Coaching Components* to its organizational infrastructure to maximize the participation of African Americans and Blacks of Africa descent in the Greater Miami visitor industry. The broaden scope will also qualify the organization for additional funding options and fundraising opportunities.

From 1990 to 2010 over 1.4 million have been raised for the **Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami**, a 501c (3) non-profit organization. The value of scholarship distribution has reached approximately \$1.2 million, more than 200 scholarships have been awarded to students, new educational partnerships developed and expanded with Florida International University, Johnson & Wales University and Miami Dade College. Program graduates have emerged as industry leaders in hotels, cruise lines, restaurants, and as educators in Miami and across the country. The **Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami** also benefits from the financial support and leadership of the Greater Miami Conventions & Visitors Bureau, Miami-Dade County's leading hotels, cruise lines, food and beverage partners and corporate institutions. Many are participants in its' Corporate Sponsored fundraisers, Patrons and Board Members.

The history of the **Black Hospitality Initiative of Greater Miami** began in 1990 when Greater Miami and the Beaches faced the challenges of a Black tourism boycott. Spurred by the snubbing of visitor and anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela by local political leaders, the boycott would last 33-months and end with a 20-point program to boost the role of African Americans in the local visitor industry. In 1991 the Greater Miami Convention & Visitors Bureau (GMCVB) established the organization to address challenges resulting from the boycott and to specifically help expand the roles and participation of African Americans in the local visitor industry. This unique formation has framed and shaped the ways in which the organization operates today.

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