

Statements & Talking Points

Visit Orlando

Orlando has always been and will continue to be a diverse, welcoming and inclusive community. As the top travel destination in the country and longstanding leader in the travel industry, our community has a history of welcoming all to our destination.

Travel and tourism positively impacts our community and plays a valuable role in ongoing engagement and dialogue. Visit Orlando will continue to encourage travel to our destination to drive progress and support hard-working small businesses.

Orange County Mayor Jerry L. Demings

“Orange County is open for business. Our residents represent a broad diaspora of cultures, which makes us stronger as a society. Please be assured our community values diversity and embraces inclusion. Hate is never welcome here. We look forward to working with the NAACP to reassure them and others that Orange County is a caring, compassionate and welcoming community.”

International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association

IGLTA was founded in Florida 40 years ago and has many valued members and partners located in this U.S. state, where the government is currently focused on enacting laws that endanger and demean LGBTQ+ people and other marginalized communities.

This hateful legislation contradicts the messages of inclusivity that we strive to elevate in the travel industry globally and defies the very spirit of hospitality. But laws are not reflective of an entire state or population.

IGLTA will always stand with our members against boycotts, choosing to unite with the many destinations, tourism businesses, and individuals in Florida and beyond that celebrate equity, diversity, and inclusion. It is through these connections that we can create and maintain safe spaces for all travelers.

[IGLTA Statement on Florida](#)

Blacks in Travel & Tourism's Response to the NAACP Travel Advisory for Florida

Response to the NAACP's Florida Travel Advisory

By the [Future of Black Tourism](#), [Blacks in Travel & Tourism](#) and [Black Travel Alliance](#)

The [Future of Black Tourism](#), [Blacks in Travel & Tourism](#) and the [Black Travel Alliance](#) issues the following statement in response to the [NAACP's Florida travel advisory](#) to African Americans, and other people of color regarding the hostility towards African Americans in Florida. DeSantis' attack on Black history studies and undermining of diversity, equity and inclusion efforts for political gain is not a

representation of everyone in the state of Florida, especially Black businesses and marginalized communities who stand to be most negatively impacted by the NAACP's call to action. The question we all must ask ourselves is, "Who does the Florida Travel Advisory really hurt?"

While we recognize that the Florida NAACP Conference and the national office of the NAACP feel it is their responsibility to take a stance, where is the consideration that the travel advisory can become damaging to small Black travel and tourism businesses and underserved communities in Florida that rely heavily on tourism?

How much or little does the NAACP know about the travel and tourism industry and the lack of diversity, equity and inclusion that Black businesses have endured up until the Black Lives Matters Movement only three years ago? Does the NAACP understand how small Black businesses in our industry have had to work extremely hard to become better positioned to be sought out by Black travelers and others seeking diverse, authentic local experiences (i.e., food, tours, cultural museums, accommodations, etc.)?

Furthermore, the [NAACP's travel advisory](#) contradicts with the efforts of industry organizations and initiatives such as the Future of Black Tourism, Blacks in Travel & Tourism, Black Travel Alliance, and others that have been intentionally working to level the playing field for small Black businesses in Florida and across the country. The efforts of these organizations have led more Black travelers and others to be intentional in seeking out and doing business with Black businesses in the industry to help sustain and scale this underrepresented segment of travel and tourism.

Perhaps the NAACP should have been intentional in meeting with the leaders of these Black travel & tourism entities to gain a broader perspective on the plight of small Black travel and tourism businesses and how any disruption of visitors patronizing their businesses can cause devastating financial losses considering that many Black businesses are still trying to fully recover from the impact of the global pandemic.

If Black businesses that rely on tourists' foot traffic and dollars are expected to take one for the team, what options to help sustain these businesses does the NAACP offer to ensure they are not impacted negatively or go out of business due to lack of cash flow derived by visitors? How will the NAACP ensure local Black-owned restaurants, tour operators and guides, boutique hotels/B&B, cultural museums, transportation providers and other businesses in Florida that rely on tourism dollars are not impacted by its travel advisory? If they are impacted, what plans are in place by the NAACP to help these businesses recover and sustain operations? How will the NAACP measure the economic impact of the Florida travel advisory on small Black businesses and communities?

We believe there a better way to make a statement to Governor DeSantis beyond a travel advisory petitioning African Americans and people of color to stay away from Florida? Small Black businesses and marginalized communities certainly should not be the sacrificial lamb.

Traditionally, we have looked to the NAACP to provide proactive leadership and solution-based strategies that fight against social and racial injustices that do not seek to further set back Black businesses and marginalized communities. [Future of Black Tourism](#), [Blacks in Travel & Tourism](#) and the [Black Travel Alliance](#) stand ready to work alongside the NAACP to find alternative solutions that do not impede the sustainability, scalability or profitability of underserved small Black travel and tourism businesses as a result of its travel advisory.

Stephanie M. Jones, Founder & CEO, Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance/Blacks in Travel & Tourism and
Martinique Lewis, Co-Founder & President, Black Travel Alliance

For comments, please contact connect@futureofblacktourism.com.

Stephanie M. Jones, MBA

Founder & CEO, Cultural Heritage Economic Alliance, Inc. (CHEA)

United States Travel and Tourism Advisory Board Member, U.S. Department of Commerce

Orlando International Airport (MCO)

As the global gateway to Central Florida, Orlando International Airport has long made the safety and security of our passengers our No. 1 priority.

Our commitment to safety is embedded in our Strategic Plan, and illustrated in our adoption of technology in both pre-security and post-security areas, ensuring a safe and efficient experience.

Additionally, the Orlando Police Department, which has a dedicated unit onsite, and other law enforcement agencies patrol and can respond when needed. We warmly welcome visitors to come and enjoy all that the Sunshine state has to offer.

~ Orlando International Airport

OCCC Security

- Knightscope Autonomous Robot – Provides 24 hour surveillance in all public spaces. Initial rollout included the West Building with purchase already in process for an additional 2 robots to cover the North and South Concourses.
- SenSource People counting Sensors – Enables OCCC to monitor the number of occupants entering the facility and exhibit halls. Also integrates weather data and reporting functions that enhance weather related safety concerns.
- Security Camera Upgrades – Adding 800 additional camera locations for a total coverage of 1,600 cameras throughout the campus.
- License plate readers – Monitors all vehicular traffic entering the campus. License plate data is coordinated with Orange County Sheriff's Office and Florida DOT to ensure real time security information.
- Orange County Sheriff's Office Substation located on property
- Participate in Orange County Sheriff's Office, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, and Federal Law Enforcement intelligence gathering and sharing programs. This includes security audits, intelligence briefings, and monitoring social media and other sources for potential threats.

NCBMP

[NCBMP Offers Guidelines for Planning Events in Florida | Northstar Meetings Group](#)

NCBMP Offers Guidelines for Planning Events in Florida

The National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals has outlined a thoughtful approach to addressing DEI and civil rights concerns.

The National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals crafted a [thoughtful response](#) to the [NAACP travel advisory for Florida](#). The organization is providing guidance for planners on how to address their concerns with suppliers when considering meeting in Florida or any other destination that has "advanced policies that are unwelcoming" to Black, brown and/or LGBTQ+ individuals.

"To be clear, the NAACP's travel advisory is not a ban or a boycott of the state of Florida," the organization stated. "It is an advisory that implores visitors to be aware of their surroundings and to be purposeful in how they engage while traveling.... We understand the importance of standing for fundamental freedoms and supporting diversity, equity and inclusion from all levels, and we will continue to push for positive change. We also understand the power and influence of tourism to any economy, especially destinations, communities and partners that we consider friends."

Following are specific measures NCBMP advises in its guidelines.

When bringing a meeting to the state of Florida:

- Work with destination management organizations or hotel representatives to compile a list of Black or brown local businesses that provide services for your meeting needs. If the list is not available, require that they develop one.
- Work with the local Black or brown chambers of commerce to find local businesses to support when your meeting is in town.
- Plan a legacy project within the community that raises awareness of specific issues that align with your mission.

If considering meeting in Florida, include the following in your RFPs:

- Demographics of the DMO or hotels, including C-suite and board of directors (if applicable);
- Current supplier diversity spend, specifically for Black and brown businesses;
- Ways the organization has expressed interest in welcoming Black and brown visitors;
- And a full overview of the DMO DEI program.

If you are a DMO, hotel or convention center in Florida:

- Create authentic relationships within your local community.
- Be prepared to thoroughly answer the RFP questions suggested above, and understand the importance of the request.
- Leverage your creativity positively in how you invest in organizations that were built on the principles of DEI.

- Become more present in industry organizations that reflect communities that have been impacted by the policies of the Florida legislature.

Additional Talking Points

- We understand the frustration that people have over a wide variety of public policies—and their desire to do something about it.
- History proves that travel opens minds to diverse ideas and builds new connections.
- Travel also supports millions of hard-working Americans who suffer most when boycotts are implemented.
- We encourage leaders to leverage travel's unique ability to drive progress rather than shut the door in opposition to policies with which they disagree.