

NEXTGEAR CAPITAL FUNDS ONEZONE'S SUPPLIER DIVERSITY PROGRAM

Mentor-Protege Program Established to Improve XBE Certified Companies' Access to Procurement Opportunities

FISHERS, Ind. (March 30, 2022) – OneZone will debut its Supplier Diversity Mentor-Protege Program this spring with NextGear Capital as the initiative's funding partner. The program has been established to develop working relationships between XBE firms and prime contracting firms with a proven track record of success.

"NextGear Capital and our parent company Cox have long been steadfast advocates for diversity and inclusion; a commitment demonstrated by Forbes including us on their list of "The Best Employers for Diversity" as well as the Human Rights Campaign listing us among the "Best Places to Work for LGBTQ Equality," said John Wick, senior vice president of NextGear Capital. "Our enterprise-wide supplier diversity initiatives include inviting and encouraging the use of qualified minority, women, veteran, disability, and LGBTQ-owned businesses in our companywide purchasing process."

Wick added, "We are proud to take a leadership role in supporting worthwhile supplier diversity programs that make positive differences in our communities."

NextGear Capital's parent company, Cox, spends more than \$800 million annually partnering with diverse suppliers who offer high-quality and competitively priced products and services and is striving to spend more than \$1 billion with diverse suppliers by 2026. Their funding partnership of the Supplier Diversity Program is an example of how they support organizations that help diverse-owned businesses thrive.

"This is such an exciting time for our organization," said Jack Russell, CEO of OneZone Chamber of Commerce. "Through this program, funded exclusively by NextGear Capital, we are confident that OneZone will help XBE businesses bring their value and impact to the table. Having an opportunity to be better connected will open doors for both our mentors and proteges, and that's why this is so important to us."

The OneZone Chamber Supplier Diversity Program is now accepting applications from Hamilton County-based XBE-Certified businesses with annual grossing revenue less than \$2 million. OneZone will review all applications and select 10 program mentors and 10 program proteges to participate in this 12-month program. If interested, please visit onezonechamber.com/supplier-diversity-program/. Applications will be accepted through April 20, 2022.