



Commercial Real Estate Diverse Supplier (“CREDS”) Consortium Fact Sheet – February 2, 2023

What is the CREDS Consortium?

The Commercial Real Estate Diverse Supplier (CREDS) Consortium is an alliance of national trade associations brought together with a common goal to promote greater supplier diversity in the real estate industry.

The CREDS Consortium hopes to facilitate the journey of real estate companies that wish to increase their discretionary spending on MWBEs in our industry’s supply chain of providers, consultants, contractors, joint venture partners, vendors and other stakeholders.

Corporate and individual members represented by the CREDS Consortium organizations may measure and demonstrate progress toward Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) goals through their involvement in this pilot program. These goals can be aligned with identifying, tracking, reporting, and procuring services from firms that are Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBEs).

What is Commercial Real Estate – the “CRE” in CREDS?

“Commercial real estate” covers income-producing properties across all building types including offices, rental apartment communities and other housing for rent including senior, student, and manufactured housing, retail, hotels, industrial, warehouses, self-storage, medical offices, life science campuses, data centers, restaurants, cell towers, and buildings that mix these property types in a single structure.

Members of the associations in the CREDS Consortium are owners, developers, investors, lenders, managers, brokers, and service providers in all of these CRE asset classes.

What real estate trade associations participate in the CREDS Consortium?

- [CREW Network](#)
- [ICSC](#)
- [Mortgage Bankers Association \(MBA\)](#)
- [NAIOP, the Commercial Real Estate Development Association](#)
- [Nareit](#)
- [National Multifamily Housing Council \(NMHC\)](#)
- [The Real Estate Roundtable \(RER\)](#)

What are the CREDS Consortium’s objectives?

By banding together, CREDS believes it can have a broader industry-wide impact by:

- Improving and accelerating real estate business opportunities for MWBEs.
- Identifying and developing areas where MWBEs may benefit from technical assistance, resources, and mentoring.
- Promoting DEI across the supply chain of businesses that bring the myriad skills, services, assets and materials needed for the real estate industry to operate and thrive.
- Supporting benchmarking and reporting tools for real estate companies to track diverse supplier spending.
- Creating a network of diversity and procurement professionals in the real estate sector to share DEI best practices.

Why is the CREDS Consortium focusing on supplier diversity?

COVID-19 has had a devastating impact on many small businesses, but Black-owned businesses have been hit hardest of all. The Federal Reserve Bank of New York [reported](#) that, in the early days of the pandemic, closure rates of Black businesses declined by 41% – more than any other racial, ethnic, or minority cohort. Lack of equal access to economic opportunities for minorities existed long before COVID-19, but the pandemic exacerbated systemic inequities.

Closing legacy economic inequality gaps can add trillions to U.S. GDP, according to a [Citi GPS report](#). Further, a [McKinsey & Co. study](#) supports the nexus between better corporate financial performance and DEI initiatives. Similarly, a [PwC survey](#) of corporate directors reflects the growing body of research that diversity in management and leadership enhances profitability.

Social imperatives and the business case to expand MWBE opportunities in the real estate sector drove the CREDS associations to conduct further analysis. Their research revealed that some of the associations, and the members they represent, were pursuing DEI strategies to diversify their C-suites, boards, pipelines for employee talent, and internship and educational platforms. A number of real estate companies said they would benefit from further guidance on how to diversify their supply chains.

The respective leadership teams of the CREDS associations saw an opportunity to embark on a unique, industry-wide initiative that would benefit both “buying” real estate companies and “supplying” MWBE businesses to progress toward mutual economic, ESG, and DEI goals. These associations united as the CREDS Consortium and have each signed agreements with SupplierGATEWAY to collaborate on the 2-year pilot program.

What is *SupplierGATEWAY*?

www.suppliergateway.com

SupplierGATEWAY is a leading supplier management software platform that automates and simplifies supplier and vendor management for some of the most recognized companies in the world. Products

encompass supplier sourcing, registration, risk management, compliance, and management, as well as support for corporate responsibility, diversity, and inclusion goals.

SupplierGATEWAY is a minority-owned software company founded in 1997.

What are the benefits of the 2-year pilot program between the CREDS Consortium and SupplierGATEWAY?

The CREDS Consortium and [SupplierGATEWAY](#) have entered into a 2-year pilot program through the end of 2024. The program includes:

- **Discounted memberships to the SupplierGATEWAY vendor management software for CREDS associations' members.**

Members of the CREDS associations can subscribe to SupplierGATEWAY's software platform – at a significantly discounted price – to search for, connect with, and potentially hire MWBE suppliers. Subscribing CREDS association members can access the vendor management software and a comprehensive database of MWBE suppliers through the Consortium's portal page, hosted by SupplierGATEWAY. Hiring companies will also be able to post their purchase orders, contracting, and other hiring opportunities through the CREDS portal.

- **Data benchmarking on supplier diversity trends across the real estate industry**

During the 2-year pilot, we hope to gain insights on supplier diversity trends across the commercial real estate industry. CREDS will receive reports based on *aggregated, anonymized* data on MWBEs hired using SupplierGATEWAY's software through the CREDS portal page. However, as explained below, the CREDS Consortium will not receive individual, specific information on any potential or actual hiring transactions between a procuring company or an MWBE supplier.

What is the link to the CREDS Consortium's portal page, hosted by SupplierGATEWAY?

<https://creds.suppliergateway.com/>

The CREDS Consortium's webpage can be viewed by anyone searching the Internet. However, to log in and access the vendor software and database of MWBE suppliers, a company must register and subscribe to SupplierGATEWAY's services.

My company is a member of or represented by one of the CREDS associations. How can it participate in the 2-year pilot?

If your company is interested in hiring MWBE contractors, your first step can be to contact SupplierGATEWAY for a demo of its vendor management software and platform.

Professionals interested in these demos typically include those responsible for your company's procurement and DEI initiatives.

After receiving a demo of the platform, your company may enter into a subscription agreement directly with SupplierGATEWAY, at a significantly discounted price.

To arrange a demo and get more information on SupplierGATEWAY subscriptions exclusively for CREDS association members, contact: Julian So, Director of Sales, julian@suppliergateway.com.

What is the cost for a company to participate in the CREDS Consortium's pilot program?

The cost for a subscription to SupplierGATEWAY's vendor management software is \$10,000 USD per year, compared to the standard rate of \$18,500 for non-member companies.

This price is only available to members of the CREDS associations who sign subscription agreements with SupplierGATEWAY through December 31, 2024 (the duration of the 2-year pilot).

If a company does not want to participate in the CREDS program, that company can directly purchase the Supplier Diversity program from SupplierGATEWAY at the standard rate of \$18,500/year.

Does my company have to disclose specific supplier hiring information to the CREDS Consortium if it participates in the 2-year pilot?

No. The following information is confidential to a subscribing company:

- How much a subscribing company spends on any particular MWBE or other supplier;
- Any specific contracting opportunity a subscribing company posts on SupplierGATEWAY's platform; and
- The identity of any MWBE firm that a subscribing company hires or considers hiring.

The Consortium will be notified when one of its members subscribes through the CREDS program. However, if a company does not wish to notify the Consortium that it has signed a subscription agreement with SupplierGATEWAY or share aggregated and anonymous information about their MWBE supplier spend, it can directly purchase the Supplier Diversity program from SupplierGATEWAY at the standard rate of \$18,500/year.

Can my Company opt-out of sharing aggregated and anonymous information with the CREDS Consortium?

Participating in the CREDS Consortium program is voluntary.

As a condition of participation and receiving the CREDS Consortium discount of \$10,000/year, companies are agreeing to share aggregated and anonymous information about their MWBE supplier spend.

If a company does not want to participate in the program, that company can purchase a subscription from SupplierGATEWAY at the standard rate of \$18,500/year.

What qualifies as a Minority or Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE)?

Any bonafide U.S. or Canadian citizen or resident-owned business that is 51% owned, managed and controlled by one or more of the following categories: minority, woman, veteran, disability, or LGBTQ+.

The CREDS Consortium's definition and criteria of MWBE follows those used by SupplierGATEWAY.

My company is an MWBE. How can we sign-up for SupplierGATEWAY's vendor database?

SupplierGATEWAY lists MWBEs in its vendor database at no cost, after creating an account and filling out a profile. Learn more at www.suppliergateway.com/suppliers/.

A listing in SupplierGATEWAY's database can enhance opportunities and help build connections that may lead to more work in real estate's supply chain. However, there is no guarantee that a business listed in SupplierGATEWAY's database will be hired as a contractor by a company that is a member of or represented by one of the CREDS associations.

Are MWBE lenders, investors, and developers of real estate included in SupplierGATEWAY's vendor database?

The Consortium and SupplierGATEWAY are coordinating with members of the CREDS Associations to ensure that the vendor database includes diverse lenders, investors, and real estate developers. This will include [Minority Development Institutions \(MDIs\)](#) listed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, privately-owned MWBE providers of debt and equity, and MWBE development companies.

Does my MWBE company need to be "certified" to participate in the database?

No, but SupplierGATEWAY also offers an optional Enhanced Digital Certification (EDC) that recognizes all types of diverse businesses such as those owned by minorities, women, veterans, LGBTQ+ persons, and persons with disabilities. For any MWBE interested in pursuing

SupplierGATEWAY's EDC, the fee is \$25 for (1) year or \$70 (3) years. Many companies seeking to hire MWBEs find value in those businesses having a certification.

Learn more at <https://www.suppliergateway.com/suppliers/enhanced-digital-certification/>.

Contacts

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