

Company: Cardinal Capital Group, Boston MA

Company Description: Cardinal Capital Group is a Boston-based private lending firm founded in 2020 by Briana Hildt. Built from the ground up during the pandemic, the firm has funded over \$1.5 billion in real estate deals and employs a growing team of experts. In 2025, Cardinal was named to the Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest-growing private companies.

Nomination Category: Individual Awards Categories

Nomination Sub Category: Best Female Entrepreneur – Business Services –11 to 2,500 Employees

Nomination Title: Briana Hildt – From Startup to \$1.5B Funded: A Visionary in Private Lending



1. Which will you submit for your nomination in this category, a video of up to five (5) minutes, explaining the achievements since July 1, 2023 of the nominated woman, OR written answers to the questions? (Choose one):

Written answers to the questions

2. If you are submitting a video of up to five (5) minutes in length, provide the URL of the video here, OR attach it to your entry via the "Add Attachments, Videos, or Links to This Entry" link above, through which you may also upload a copy of your video. If you are submitting written answers to the questions for this category, provide them in the spaces below:

3. Briefly describe the nominated individual: history and past performance (up to 200 words):

Total 200 words used.

Briana Hildt is the founder and CEO of Cardinal Capital Group, a private lending firm she launched in 2020 at the height of the global pandemic. With a clear vision and unwavering determination, she built Cardinal from the ground up into one of the fastest-growing lending firms in the country. Under her leadership, the company has funded over \$1.5 billion in real estate deals and was named to the Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest-growing private companies in 2025.

Briana's journey into finance began with a belief that lending could be faster, more personal, and rooted in lasting relationships. That belief became the foundation of the Cardinal brand. She has created a company culture centered around trust, flexibility, and mentorship, drawing top talent and empowering women in an industry that has long lacked female leadership.

Outside of work, Briana is a devoted wife and mother of two. Her drive to build Cardinal came not only from entrepreneurial ambition but from a desire to create a future her family could be proud of. Her leadership is defined by authenticity, vision, and the courage to do things differently. She continues to inspire by showing what's possible when women lead with heart.

4. Outline the nominee's achievements since July 1 2023 that you wish to bring to the judges' attention (up to 250 words):

Total 203 words used.

Since July 2023, Briana Hildt has led Cardinal Capital Group through transformative growth while launching a deeply personal philanthropic initiative. Under her leadership, Cardinal surpassed \$1.5 billion in funded real estate transactions and was named to the 2025 Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest-growing private companies. She expanded her team, embraced scalable lending technologies, and continued to lead as one of the only openly LGBTQ+ women in private finance.

This year also marked the creation of Cardinal Cares, a charitable foundation born from personal heartbreak. After losing their son, Briana and her wife Natalie chose to channel grief into action. They launched Cardinal Cares to support families facing medical hardship and hosted their first charity golf tournament in June. The event raised over \$85,000 for children's hospitals and brought together a powerful community of partners, clients, and supporters.

Throughout this, Briana has continued to parent two young children, grow a high-performing business, and mentor women entering the industry. Her leadership style is not rooted in ego or tradition. It is grounded in empathy, transparency, and purpose. She is not just building a business. She is building a culture that values integrity, honors humanity, and believes in doing well by doing good.

5. Explain why the achievements you have highlighted are unique or significant. If possible compare the achievements to the performance of other players in your industry and/or to the nominee's past performance (up to 250 words):

Total 199 words used.

Since July 2023, Briana Hildt has led Cardinal Capital Group through transformative growth while launching a deeply personal philanthropic initiative. Under her leadership, Cardinal surpassed \$1.5 billion in funded real estate transactions and was named to the 2025 Inc. 5000 list of America's fastest-growing private companies. She expanded her team, embraced scalable lending technologies, and continued to lead in an industry where less than 5% of private lending firms are founded by women.

This year also marked the creation of Cardinal Cares, a charitable foundation established by Cardinal Capital Group. After the loss of their son, Briana and her wife Natalie chose to turn grief into purpose. They launched Cardinal Cares to support families facing medical hardship and hosted the company's first charity golf tournament in June. The event raised over \$85,000 for children's hospitals and brought together clients, partners, and supporters for a cause that now sits at the heart of the company's mission.

Briana continues to raise two children, scale a high-performing business, and mentor women in finance. Her leadership is grounded in empathy, courage, and clarity. She is not only building a successful firm—she is reshaping what leadership in private finance can look like.

6. Reference any attachments of supporting materials throughout this nomination and how they provide evidence of the claims you have made in this nomination (up to 250 words):

Total 104 words used.

Due to platform limitations, we are unable to attach photos, graphics, or active links to this submission. However, we have a full suite of supporting materials available and would be happy to provide them upon request.

These include Cardinal Capital Group's official 2025 Inc. 5000 recognition, a funding summary confirming over \$1.5 billion in closed transactions, internal team testimonials, and an event summary from the inaugural Cardinal Cares charity golf tournament, which raised over \$85,000 for children's hospitals. Please feel free to reach out if you would like to review any of these materials. We would be glad to share them directly!

Attachments/Videos/Links:

[Briana Hildt – From Startup to \\$1.5B Funded: A Visionary in Private Lending](#)



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