

## How The Meijer Supplier Diversity Program Helped This Chef Expand His Business



"Food is in my blood, I breathe it," said Chef Calvin Harris, Owner of Spiced Up Seasonings.

Calvin grew up in a family that loved food, especially barbeque. It was almost a given that he'd center his life's work around food. And so, with 30 years in the food business – as a classically trained chef and in research and development roles for various restaurants – Calvin took a chance on his passion and created Spiced Up Seasonings.

Calvin first saw a need for his product during the COVID-19 pandemic, when more people were cooking at home. After noticing that his neighbors and friends were frequently borrowing spices and asking for recipes, he saw an opportunity. Calvin got to work, curating a blend of seasonings that took the guesswork out to make cooking at home more convenient and healthier for all.

The result, he said, led to "less labor, more flavor."

Despite the need he was fulfilling in his community, growing his business during the pandemic was not easy. Calvin had heard about our [Supplier Diversity](#) program and reached out to the team for support.

"You name it, we've probably faced it as a small business," Calvin said. "Having partners like Meijer is key."


Our Supplier Diversity Team works with businesses, like Spiced Up Seasonings, that are at least 51 percent owned and operated by an underrepresented group. We help with marketing – both in and out of our stores – and collaborate on other promotional plans to help them succeed. Focusing on supplier diversity is an important part of our mission. Partnerships with these businesses not only drive success for them, but it also amplifies growth in our communities and economy, while better serving our customers.

"We want to support all people of different backgrounds and experiences," said Kavy Lenon, Manager of Supplier Diversity at Meijer. "Then, we can give them a space for their voice to be heard."

Spiced Up Seasoning Blends comes in five different flavors and can be found in all Meijer stores.

"This is my baby; it has my face on it," he said. "Meijer has been a true partner in terms of supporting my brand and making sure we get brand recognition," Calvin said. "They've supported me 150 percent. You can have the best product in the world, but if no one knows it's there it doesn't do you any good."

Meijer continues to partner with diverse vendors, like Chef Calvin, and is hosting a [Black Business Month Summit](#) on Aug. 16 to generate opportunities and establish connections between Black business owners and Meijer merchants.

Additional assets available online:  [Photos \(3\)](#)

<https://meijercommunity.com/How-The-Meijer-Supplier-Diversity-Program-Helped-This-Chef-Expand-His-Business>