

Meijer Seeks BIPOC Michigan Business Owners for New Product Showcase

Retailer partners with Start Garden to host an event to enhance supplier diversity and provide a roadmap to Black, Indigenous and people of color-owned businesses interested in joining its shelves

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., July 29, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- Meijer announced today that it will host a supplier diversity product presentation event in October, giving Michigan businesses owned by Black, Indigenous and people of color the opportunity to showcase their offerings for interested Meijer merchants.

The event will leverage the retailer's partnership with [Start Garden](#), a Grand Rapids-based business incubator focused on empowering start-ups through financial, intellectual and social capital. It will be the fourth supplier diversity event the retailer has hosted since 2020.

"Our [supplier diversity](#) efforts represent an ongoing commitment to our customers and team members to offer products and invest in partnerships that represent them and their communities," said Peter Whitsett, Meijer Executive Vice President of Merchandising and Marketing. "We look forward to expanding our product assortment and creating a positive economic impact in our communities through this event."

The multi-day event will take place in person and will focus on the following categories:

- Apparel, footwear and accessories
- General merchandise

Black, Indigenous and people of color-owned Michigan-based businesses with retail-ready products in those categories can apply by Friday, Aug. 27 for consideration [here](#).

"After the success of our first three virtual supplier diversity events, we're excited to try something a little different by focusing on local brands and offering a live opportunity for these vendors to build relationships with our team," said Jamie Akemann, Group Vice President of Global Sourcing, Indirect Procurement, Supplier Diversity and Product Quality at Meijer.

Once applications for the event are submitted, the Start Garden and Meijer teams will review and select the vendors to participate in the event in October. There, Meijer merchants will meet with chosen vendors to learn more about their products, business models and plans for growth through 5-minute presentations. After getting to know the participants, Meijer merchants will award retail opportunities to vendors ready to expand into Meijer stores with products that will best serve Meijer customers. Vendors who are not ready to receive business offers at that time, will be invited to the retailer's upcoming Roadmap to Retail event to learn more important skills to help them succeed in the future. Through this event, Meijer plans to nurture long-term relationships with vendors and help them grow into future partners.

While this event is open only to businesses owned by Black, Indigenous and people of color in Michigan, Meijer is committed to supporting businesses across the spectrum of diversity. Diverse vendors who do not qualify for this event and those carrying services or products outside of the categories mentioned above are encouraged to submit their information for consideration through the retailer's [supplier diversity page](#).

In addition to partnering with Meijer to host this event, Start Garden is also one of the retailer's racial inequity investment partners. In 2020, Start Garden was one of 22 agencies across the Midwest to share in a \$5 million investment from Meijer to bring about a future of hope, equality and respect in Black and African American communities.

For more information on the retailer's Diversity & Inclusion efforts, please click [here](#).


About Meijer: Meijer is a Grand Rapids, Mich.-based retailer that operates 257 supercenters and grocery stores throughout Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Kentucky and Wisconsin. A privately-owned and family-operated company since 1934, Meijer pioneered the "one-stop shopping" concept and has evolved through the years to include expanded fresh produce and meat departments, as well as pharmacies, comprehensive apparel departments, pet departments, garden centers, toys and electronics. For additional information on Meijer, please visit www.meijer.com. Follow Meijer on Twitter [@twitter.com/Meijer](https://twitter.com/Meijer) and [@twitter.com/MeijerPR](https://twitter.com/MeijerPR) or become a fan at www.facebook.com/meijer.

About Start Garden: Start Garden is an innovator in entrepreneur centered economic development working

to make Michigan the best place to start a business. Its purpose is to remove systemic barriers that have prevented aspiring business owners from launching and growing. It does this by making sure financial capital, social capital, intellectual capital and physical infrastructure are accessible to entrepreneurs from any background, trying to get any idea off the ground. Learn more at startgarden.com.

SOURCE Meijer

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