

Soulcial Kitchen and Urban Eats Launch Strategic Collaboration to Build a Regional Pathway for Food Entrepreneurs

A connected ecosystem spanning Metro East Illinois and St. Louis City — from mobile food training to shared-kitchen incubation to long-term business growth.

ST LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, May 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Soulcial Kitchen](#) and [Urban Eats](#) are launching a strategic collaboration to strengthen the regional pathway for emerging food entrepreneurs across Metro East Illinois and St. Louis City.

The collaboration connects two complementary models. Soulcial Kitchen, founded by Brigadier General (Ret.) John E. Michel, operates a nationally recognized food truck apprenticeship and food access platform built on dignity, mobility, workforce development, and entrepreneurship. Urban Eats, located in Dutchtown in South St. Louis City, is a shared kitchen, neighborhood food hall, and food business incubator that helps entrepreneurs test, launch, and grow in a lower-risk, customer-facing environment.



Urban Eats Incubator

“

Soulcial Kitchen & Urban Eats are solving different parts of the same problem and together, we can create a stronger regional pathway to long-term business growth.”

John Chen

Soulcial Kitchen’s broader Dignity Food Hub model integrates food access, culinary training, Food-as-Medicine production, and community connection through place-based hubs and mobile distribution. Urban Eats complements that model by providing the physical launch environment where entrepreneurs continue developing products, serving customers, and building the systems needed to grow — across three pathways: foodservice, consumer packaged goods, and direct-to-consumer sales.

“Soulcial Kitchen and Urban Eats are solving different parts of the same problem,” said John Chen of Urban Eats. “John Michel and the Soulcial Kitchen team has built a powerful mobile food and apprenticeship model that helps people enter the food economy with the training and confidence born of real-world experience. Urban Eats gives them a place-based environment to keep testing, serving customers, and building toward sustainability. Together, we can create a stronger regional pathway — from first exposure and coaching, to mobile operations, to shared kitchen incubation, to long-term business growth.”

Food entrepreneurship is one of the most accessible entry points into business ownership — especially for first-time, immigrant, minority, women, and working-class entrepreneurs — but it is also one of the riskiest. Too many aspiring entrepreneurs are forced to leap from idea straight into high-cost leases, equipment, licensing, and staffing before they have proven their concept or learned the operational realities of running a food business. Even a food truck, often perceived as a flexible alternative, demands serious capital and daily execution. What most entrepreneurs need is not simply access to a truck or a kitchen, but a staged pathway that builds readiness before either form of major risk is taken on.

The collaboration is designed to close that gap by treating food entrepreneurship as a connected ecosystem rather than a single program: mobile training, coaching, shared kitchen access, customer testing, food hall participation, catering, packaged product development, and neighborhood events — leading to standalone business growth.

“Food entrepreneurs need more than advice,” Chen said. “They need places to practice, customers to learn from, and partners who understand that entrepreneurship is built through repetition, trust, and real-world experience.”

In the months ahead, the organizations will continue developing shared entrepreneur referrals, coordinated coaching, and joint storytelling — connecting food access, workforce development, and small business incubation across both sides of the Mississippi River.

Entrepreneur Spotlight: Stay Pressed Juice Co.

Stay Pressed Juice Co., a recent Soulcial Kitchen program participant, are the first entrepreneurs to move to Urban Eats to explore the next stage of the company’s growth. Their transition reflects the practical purpose of the collaboration: helping entrepreneurs developing a new product transition from coaching and early-stage development into a real-world launch environment.

John Chen
Urban Eats
+1 314-596-2436

[email us here](#)

Visit us on social media:

[LinkedIn](#)

[Instagram](#)

[Facebook](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/910636346>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2026 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.