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Original Soul Vegetarian Named One of The Nation's Fastest Growing Firms in Under-Resourced Communities and Hiring More Than 15 New Employees Despite Pandemic

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The [Initiative for a Competitive Inner City](#) (ICIC) announced that OSV LLLP (Original Soul Vegetarian), also known as Soul Veg City is a winner of the 2020 Inner City 100 (IC100) award which recognizes the 100 fastest-growing firms in under-resourced communities across America. The winners were picked based on revenue growth and job creation during the four-year period from 2015 to 2019.

"IC100 companies are forces of economic opportunity, optimism and transformation in their communities, and it's an honor to recognize Soul Veg City's leadership," said ICIC CEO Steve Grossman. "Especially during this incredibly challenging time, as small business owners reckon with the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic, these pioneering entrepreneurs have demonstrated a deep commitment to and passion for their local communities."

Soul Veg City has been making strides and investing in its south side Chatham community since 1981. As the first vegan restaurant in the Midwest, it is proud to celebrate 40 years of business in 2021. The original location of 203 E. 75th Street that opened in 1981 is currently undergoing an expansion and renovations to match the new "Soul Veg City" re-branding.

39 years ago, the restaurant was opened as Soul Vegetarian East by Prince Asiel Ben Israel to bring a healthier diet and lifestyle to the world. From the beginning, the restaurant served heart healthy plant-based foods at a time when there was little awareness of the connection between food and disease. Now under the ownership of the Prince's son and daughter, Arel Brown and Lori Seay, Soul Veg City is in the process of a major renovation that is expanding the dining room, and more than doubling the size of the famous juice bar, live bar, and hot bar.

The second-generation owners have expanded and renovated the original 75th Street location while focusing on the new rebrand of Soul Veg City, and the capacity to hire more than 15 new employees in the first quarter of 2021. The re-grand opening of this location will take place in March, and the restaurant looks forward to providing both more employment to Chicagoans and also health vegan food options for all.

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