

Six UNC HBCUs Get Covid Vaccine Freezers

By Administrator
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The UNC System's six historically minority-serving institutions have each received a new mobile freezer capable of safely storing and transporting COVID-19 vaccine vials. These six freezers represent the first of 62 scheduled to arrive in the state in the coming months as part of Operation Deep Freeze.

The new freezers, provided by the NC Policy Collaboratory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, are part of a broader effort to increase North Carolina's total vaccine cold-storage capacity by 1.86 million two-milliliter vials. The 15 research institutions within the UNC System will receive a total of 62 new freezers capable of safely storing COVID-19 vaccines at temperatures as low as -80 Celsius (-112 Fahrenheit). A combination of 32 large freezers, 1 mid-sized freezer, and 29 smaller mobile units will add flexibility for transport and storage of vaccines across the state. The freezers will support state and local public health agencies, hospitals, and pharmacies with the critical logistics of sub-zero storage and subsequent distribution of COVID-19 vaccines in North Carolina. Vaccines stored at UNC institutions will be distributed according to the State's COVID-19 vaccine distribution plan at the direction of state and local public health officials. UNC campuses that serve rural areas and underserved populations will receive additional mobile freezer units, including the state's six historically minority-serving institutions.

Stirling Ultracold, the manufacturer of the freezers, agreed to offer a phased delivery of multiple shipments at no additional cost to expedite vaccine-related logistics across the UNC System. VWR Scientific, who is the exclusive sales representative for the larger freezers, has also worked with the Collaboratory to identify and deploy loaner units at no charge to assist campuses and their local health partners. The first two were delivered to UNC Pembroke last week.

The NC Policy Collaboratory was established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 2016 to utilize and disseminate research expertise across the University of North Carolina System for practical use by state and local government. In May 2020, state lawmakers appropriated \$29 million to the Collaboratory to develop and oversee a pan-campus COVID-19 research portfolio that has resulted in more than 85 individual projects across 14 UNC System campuses.