

Coalition for Food and Health Equity Launches First Ujamaa Café™ Community Fridge in Nashville

Dr. Leeja Carter Expands Ujamaa Café™ Community Fridge Initiative to Nashville

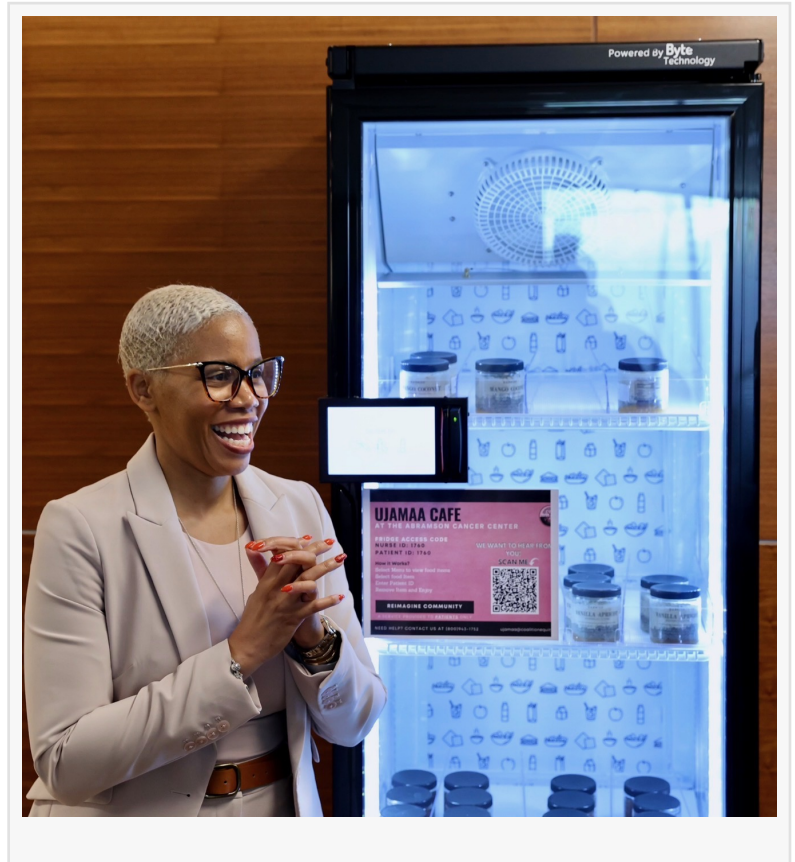
NASHVILLE, TN, UNITED STATES, August 5, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Leeja Carter, founder of the Coalition for Food and Health Equity (CFHE), is bringing her equity-centered food access model to Nashville with the launch of the organization's first [Ujamaa Café™](#) Community Fridge in Tennessee.

The new high-tech refrigerator will provide locally sourced, healthy, grab-and-go food options for the location's customers and unhoused community members. Designed to make nutritious food more convenient and accessible, the fridge will serve as a community-based resource that responds directly to food insecurity while supporting local food providers and small businesses.

The Nashville expansion is a significant milestone for CFHE, whose roots are in the metropolitan New Jersey area. Through its Ujamaa Café Community Fridge initiative, the organization has built a forward-thinking model for connecting food-insecure communities with fresh, high-quality meals and practical support.

"Food access is health access," said Dr. Carter. "This expansion to Nashville reflects our commitment to ensuring that communities have dignified, reliable access to nourishing food where they live, work, and seek support. We are excited to partner locally and bring the Ujamaa Cafe model to Tennessee for the first time."

Dr. Carter is an expert in inclusive, equity-focused health and wellness practice whose work



addresses the structural barriers that prevent underserved communities from accessing healthy food, health resources, and supportive services. After a 15-year career as a professor, she left academia in 2021 to lead this work full-time, transforming her applied research and commitment to Black women's health and community wellness into direct, on-the-ground action.

Through CFHE, Dr. Carter has helped feed families throughout food deserts in New Jersey and Philadelphia using smart, tech-enabled refrigerators stocked with quality, healthy food. Her innovative approach has received national attention through a feature in AfroTech.

The Ujamaa Café and Ujamaa Well programs expand the organization's impact beyond food distribution. Together, these initiatives address food access, affordability, community wellness, social-service navigation, and economic opportunities for local small businesses. The Nashville refrigerator will continue that mission by creating a practical point of access for residents who need immediate, nutritious meal options.

The expansion also reflects the meaning of Ujamaa, a Swahili principle centered on cooperative economics and collective responsibility. By prioritizing local sourcing, community partnerships, and accessible nutrition, the Ujamaa Café Community Fridge model strengthens both individual well-being and the local ecosystem of food entrepreneurs, service providers, and neighbors.

"This is not simply a refrigerator," Dr. Carter said. "It is infrastructure for care, connection, and community health."

Shauna Jackson

Dr. Leeja Carter

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