



**Metropolitan Water
Reclamation District
of Greater Chicago**



2022 MWRD

AFRICAN AMERICAN

HISTORY MONTH

Kizzmekia Corbett, MD

Dr. Kizzmekia Corbett, age 35, is an African American research scientist, helping to lead vaccine research at the National Institute of Health's Vaccine Research Center. Corbett works on the front lines of research of COVID-19 vaccines. The research performed by the team she led in collaboration with Moderna was instrumental in the development of the vaccine.

Corbett, originally from North Carolina, became interested in science at an early age. In 2008, she earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology/Biological Sciences from the University of Maryland, Baltimore on a full ride as a Meyerhoff Scholar. The Meyerhoff Scholars program seeks to increase diversity among future leaders in science, technology, engineering and related fields. Corbett has a Doctor of Philosophy degree majoring in Microbiology and Immunology from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She went to Sri Lanka for her doctoral work, where she studied the role of human antibodies in dengue virus pathogenesis.



In addition to her brilliance in her field, Dr. Corbett has received recognition for her ability to connect to people. She wants people to know "This person who looks like you has been working on this for several years and I also wanted it to be visible because I wanted people to understand that I stood by the work that I'd done for so long as well." Dr. Corbett continues to work to ease vaccine hesitancy in the African American community caused by historical events such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment and the case of Henrietta Lacks, a Maryland cancer patient who had cells removed without her permission. The cells were used in medical research worth billions of dollars without any compensation ever going to Lacks or her family.