

## NEWS RELEASE

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**ROANOKE  
FOODSHED  
NETWORK**  
SUPPORTING FOOD & FARMING IN OUR REGION



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### The Roanoke Foodshed Network Grants \$17,000 to Local Organizations

(Roanoke, VA) - The Roanoke Foodshed Network (RFN) granted \$17,000 to area nonprofits and schools to support food access work in the Roanoke region. The following organizations received funding:

- Virginia Cooperative Extension
- One Valley Inc.
- Feeding Southwest Virginia
- Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP)
- Cave Spring Elementary School PTA
- Roanoke Refugee Partnership
- New Horizons Healthcare
- Salem Farmers Market

The Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY) made the Healthy Communities Action Teams (HCAT) grant possible. VFHY reaches 50,000 children annually through a comprehensive approach that provides infrastructure to empower youth to make healthy choices by reducing and preventing substance use and childhood obesity.

"The RFN HCAT mini-grant funding will enable us at One Valley to expand our capacity to provide fresh garden produce to area food pantries," says Gene Yagow, Secretary of One Valley, Inc. "One Valley's Carver Garden and 8th & Gilmer Garden in Northwest Roanoke harvested over 2,000 pounds of produce last year, with a major increase projected for the current year. We are excited to use this funding to build better produce distribution systems so the produce can get onto the plates of people who need it the most."

"New Horizons Healthcare is proud to be one of the recipients of the Roanoke Foodshed Network Healthy Community Action Team (HCAT) mini-grant program funded through the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth," says Mae Johnson, Resource Development Manager at New Horizons Healthcare. "This grant funding will allow us to help many of our patients access nutritious food, which can be challenging for residents of the Northwest Roanoke community to obtain. Good nutrition is important to good health."

"The HCAT mini-grant funding for the Jr. Farmer Program at the Salem Farmers Market will be a great addition to our community outreach efforts this season," says Isaac Campbell, the Salem Farmers Market Manager. "The program will provide hands-on learning experiences for youth at the market, offering a booklet that they can work through to explore topics like nutrition, natural science, and the importance of local agriculture. The Jr. Farmer Program aims to increase awareness of and access to local produce for youth who participate while supporting local growers and fostering a healthier, more connected community at the market."

The Roanoke Foodshed Network began as a series of conversations among farmers, planners, and local food advocates in 2014 and was formalized in 2020 through funding provided by a United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) planning grant. Over the past four years, the RFN has created four Working Groups to support food systems priorities within the region, including healthy food access, economic development, farming and food production, and network development.

In 2023, the RFN's Healthy Food Access Working Group received a second round of funding from VFHY's HCAT grant to support collaboration and communication across healthy food access partners and provide community mini-grants for programs supporting trauma-informed nutrition education, school and community gardens, agriculture workforce development, and Fresh Food Prescription. To date, the RFN has provided over \$54,000 in community mini grants to support healthy food access efforts in the region.

Representatives from LEAP, Carilion Clinic, Feeding Southwest Virginia, and United Way Roanoke Valley serve as the Leadership Team of the Roanoke Foodshed Network's Healthy Food Access Working Group.

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### **About the Roanoke Foodshed Network:**

The Roanoke Foodshed Network (RFN) was formed in 2020 as a way to build community and capacity between diverse partners working to address food systems change in the Roanoke

region. The goals of this network have grown out of a decade of conversations with farmers, planners, and local food advocates. The RFN represents over 50 diverse nonprofit and community organizations, farmers, food businesses, community members, higher education institutions, and government agencies with the collective vision to build equitable and resilient food and farm systems that produce health and abundance in the Roanoke region of Southwest Virginia. The Roanoke-based nonprofit Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP) is a fiscal sponsor for the network. Other leading network partners include Carilion Clinic, Feeding Southwest Virginia, Virginia Association for Biological Farming, and the Virginia Tech Center for Food Systems and Community Transformation.

**About Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP):**

Local Environmental Agriculture Project (LEAP) is a Roanoke-based 501(c)(3) nonprofit. Founded in 2009, LEAP strives to nurture an equitable food and farming system that prioritizes health and abundance. LEAP programs include two farmers markets, a mobile market, an online marketplace, a farm share, a food hub, a commercial kitchen, community gardens, and robust nutrition incentive programs. LEAP also works with community partners from across the region on initiatives that promote farm to community and food system development. LEAP is the lead organization for Virginia Fresh Match, a statewide network of markets and retail outlets that make fruits and vegetables more affordable for SNAP participants. Learn more about LEAP at: [www.leapforlocalfood.org](http://www.leapforlocalfood.org).

**About Carilion Clinic:**

Carilion Clinic is a not-for-profit healthcare organization serving more than one million people in Virginia's Blue Ridge and Southwest Virginia regions. Headquartered in Roanoke, Carilion's comprehensive hospital network, primary and specialty physician practices, and other complementary services deliver high-quality, patient-centered care close to home. Carilion's enduring commitment to the health of our communities has advanced over the last decade but remains grounded in providing care to patients regardless of their ability to pay. Beginning with the transformation to the clinic model of a physician-led, integrated health care system, Carilion has developed robust academic partnerships with the creation of the Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine, the Fralin Biomedical Research Institute at VTC, and Radford University Carilion's school for allied health sciences. Carilion advances care through education and research elements and continues to rely on the generous support of donors to advance its mission to improve the health of the communities we serve. Learn more at [CarilionClinic.org](http://CarilionClinic.org), and follow us on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#).

**About Feeding Southwest Virginia:**

Feeding Southwest Virginia is a member of Feeding America®. For the last four decades, the Food Bank's ultimate mission has been to: nourish neighbors, engage community partners, and develop solutions to address food insecurity. The primary function of the Food Bank is to secure and distribute large quantities of food for our neighbors. Approximately \$30 million worth of food and grocery-related products are channeled annually through more than 370 food pantries and meal programs in our 26-county, 9-city region. Visit [www.feedingswva.org](http://www.feedingswva.org) for more information or like us on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter @feedingswva.

**About United Way Roanoke Valley:**

United Way Roanoke Valley is a nonprofit organization based in Roanoke City and serving Roanoke, Craig, Botetourt, Franklin Counties and the Cities of Roanoke, Salem and the Town of Vinton. United Way mobilizes resources and the caring power of the community to address the community's most pressing needs. United Way focuses on education, financial stability and health. Healthy Roanoke Valley, one initiative housed with United Way Roanoke Valley, is a partnership with more than 50 organizations committed to transforming the way our community thinks about and values health. The Healthy Roanoke Valley initiative focuses on the social determinants of health (including access to nutritious foods) and engages community members to create pathways to wellness. Learn more at [www.uwrv.org](http://www.uwrv.org)