

Halifax County



Catalyst Coordinator: **Erin Carson**

Host Organization: **Halifax County Cooperative Extension**

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As the Catalyst Coordinator for Halifax County, Erin Carson has built on the work of prior Catalyst Coordinators and has been involved in the following efforts:

- Continued past work to assist the Roanoke Valley Farmers' Market in developing a sustainability plan, expanding community outreach, and improving its SNAP/EBT acceptance program.
- Partnering with the Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiative and local civic and social organizations to increase physical activity among youth through the Neighborhood Play Days initiative in neighborhoods where transportation is a barrier.
- Supporting Partners in Faith, a collaborative effort of faith leaders across Halifax and Northampton counties to champion health and wellness within their congregations and communities.
- Working to increase the number of community gardens in priority population areas and connecting those gardens with each other for collaboration and peer learning opportunities.
- Linking Scotland Neck and Southeast Halifax groups to countywide efforts to increase physical activity and healthy eating, including the Roanoke Valley Community Health Initiative.
- Helping to coordinate the Roanoke Valley Local Foods Roundtable, a group committed to improving the food system in Halifax County.

Past Catalyst Coordinator Victoria Chetty played an integral role in the creation of a countywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including a series of eight forums across the county to gain community input from more than 300 people. Following the adoption of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, she supported the creation of an infographic to communicate the content of the new plan to the community at large.

Highlight: Leading the Way in Planning for Health

With the support of the Catalyst program, Halifax County became a regional leader in infusing health considerations into long-term plans. These plans have set the direction for years to come and will help make healthy living easier in Halifax. Halifax Catalyst Coordinators Gavin Coombs (2013-14) and Victoria Chetty (2014-15) were actively involved in developing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that aims to increase opportunities for physical activity for across the county. Victoria also co-chaired the steering committee to update Roanoke Rapids' comprehensive land use plan. Through these efforts, as well as working with schools to open facilities for community use, the Catalyst has worked to connect people and projects.

Erin Carson became the Halifax Catalyst Coordinator in January 2016 and has continued working with partners to build on the strong groundwork that is being laid to support healthy eating and active living throughout Halifax County. She is currently working to support faith organizations' healthy eating and active living efforts in the community, partner with community organizations to increase the number of safe places to be active, improve SNAP/EBT access at farmers' markets and further the work of coalitions that bring more voices to the table around improving health in the county.