

Rockville Backyard Hens

1. How long has the project been operating?

Owning chickens in Rockville became legal on July 1, 2015.

2. Who is responsible for the project and are there supporting organizations? Please include all organizations involved and their roles.

Rockville Environment Commission The Rockville Environment Commission approached a city council member to support the re-legalization of chickens in Rockville after a city-wide environmental survey found that local food was a top priority of respondents. After extensive research which included gaining the approval of city's animal control board, the commission wrote a white paper on the pros and cons of chicken keeping including how other cities formulated their ordinances, and voted unanimously to recommend the re-legalization of up to five hens in Rockville to the Mayor and Council. After extensive public hearings on the issue, the Mayor and Council voted 3-2 in favor of allowing hens back into the city.

Rockville Police Department: The Rockville Police Department Neighborhood Services Division is responsible for licensing and enforcing the ordinance allowing chickens in the city.

Maryland Department of Agriculture: City flocks must be registered with the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

3. Who is served by the program?

Residents who live in single-family dwellings can keep chickens. Those who live in multi-family dwellings or townhouses are prohibited from keeping them. The ordinance does not supersede HOA restrictions against keeping hens.

4. Was the project publicized?

The Rockville ordinance allowing hens was publicized in the July/August 2015 edition of Rockville Reports, a citywide paper that is freely distributed to the city's 65,000 residents. It is also publicized on the city's website in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

The outreach information includes the requirements needed to comply with the ordinance which covers the \$25 annual permit, a written notice to neighbors, a site plan showing the coop is at least 5-feet from the property line and 40-feet from other homes, a requirement to register chickens with the state department of agriculture, a predator-proof coop, and a requirement to keep coops sanitary.

Please see attached information for guidelines and outreach.

5. What is the project's annual budget? Specifically, what costs are associated with the program? Are there cost savings as a result of the project?

The cost of enforcing and administering the hen ordinance is not tracked separately but is rather part of the general animal control ordinance. There are no cost savings associated with this project.

6. How is the project funded and is it self-sustaining?

The project is funded through the general budget as part of the Neighborhood Services Division of the police department.

7. How will the program continue in the future?

The program will continue into the future indefinitely.

8. How is the project being evaluated?

Since 2015, the City received 25 chicken permit applications. Presently there are 14 active permits issued. This program is new and not expected to be comprehensively evaluated until a future date.

9. Has the program sparked other projects? Please upload any relevant documentation related to the project (e.g., outreach materials, budgets, surveys, photos, design plans, reports – with relevant information highlighted)

None.