

SAVE THE CHICKENS ACT

A Community Proposal for Reasonable Backyard Fowl Regulations

Village of Indiantown, Florida

May 2026

Executive Summary

The Save The Chickens Act is a citizen-led proposal to establish fair and practical regulations allowing limited numbers of backyard chickens (hens) in residential areas of the Village of Indiantown for household food purposes. This proposal respects the Village's existing Land Development Regulations while addressing the real needs of many working families who rely on small flocks for eggs and food security.

Current enforcement of Section 3-5.2 (Animals and Livestock) has created hardship for immigrant and low-income households who maintain traditional practices of keeping a modest number of hens. This Act proposes balanced standards that protect neighbors while preserving a valuable form of household self-sufficiency.

Background and Community Context

Indiantown is home to a diverse population, including significant numbers of Guatemalan, Mexican, Haitian, and Venezuelan families. For many of these households, keeping a small number of chickens is a longstanding cultural practice and an important source of fresh eggs and protein. In times of rising food costs, this modest form of food production helps families stretch limited budgets.

At the same time, the Village is experiencing rapid change through new development and annexation. As rules are enforced more strictly, long-time residents are finding that practices they have followed for years are now being treated as violations. This creates not only practical hardship but also a growing sense that the community is changing in ways that do not include them.

Current Regulations and the Need for Reform

The Village of Indiantown Land Development Regulations (adopted 2020) include the following relevant provisions:

- **Definition of “Fowl”:** Any bird used as food or for egg production, including chickens, ducks, geese, and turkey.
- **Definition of “Livestock”:** Domesticated animals commonly kept on a farm (cattle, horses, goats, pigs, etc.).
- **Section 3-5.2 – Animals and Livestock:** This section is currently being used to prohibit or restrict chickens in many residential zoning districts, particularly Limited Residential.

While the Village has the authority to regulate animals, the current approach does not adequately distinguish between commercial livestock operations and a family keeping a small number of hens for household use. The result is enforcement actions that remove a valuable food resource from families who can least afford to lose it.

Proposed Framework: Save The Chickens Act

We respectfully propose that the Village Council direct staff to prepare an ordinance amendment with the following core elements:

1. Limited Backyard Hens for Family Food Use

Allow up to eight (8) hens per household in all residential zoning districts for personal egg and meat consumption. This number balances food production with reasonable property size limitations.

2. Clear and Reasonable Standards

- **No roosters** permitted in residential zones to prevent noise complaints.
- **Coop and run requirements:** Secure, well-maintained structures with minimum setbacks from property lines and neighboring dwellings (recommended: 10–15 feet from side and rear property lines).
- **Cleanliness and sanitation:** Coops must be kept clean to prevent odors and pests.
- **No free-roaming:** Chickens must be contained within the coop and run area.
- **Optional registration:** A simple, no-fee registration process with the Village to help code enforcement track locations and provide education.

3. Recognition of Food Security and Cultural Value

The ordinance should explicitly acknowledge that limited backyard fowl supports household food security and respects the cultural traditions of many Indiantown residents.

4. Reasonable Transition for Existing Flocks

Provide existing flock owners with a 60–90 day compliance period and clear guidance on how to bring coops into compliance rather than immediate removal orders.

5. Implementation Timeline Acknowledgment

We understand that fulfillment of these changes will not be fully ready to implement until sometime in June 2027 as a timed law will expire. However, we encourage the Village to begin the necessary preparations in advance of that time so that this is ready for immediate ratification.

Benefits to the Community

- **Food Security:** Helps lower-income families access fresh, affordable protein.
- **Cultural Respect:** Recognizes and preserves traditional practices of many long-time residents.
- **Community Stability:** Reduces pressure that contributes to displacement and gentrification.
- **Balanced Regulation:** Protects neighbors through clear, enforceable standards while allowing reasonable family use.
- **Civic Engagement:** Encourages residents to participate in local government and shape the rules that affect their daily lives.

Call to Action

We call on the Village Council of Indiantown to:

1. Direct Village staff to prepare a draft ordinance amendment based on the principles outlined in this proposal.
2. Hold a public workshop to gather input from residents on reasonable backyard fowl regulations.
3. Adopt clear, fair rules that allow limited backyard chickens for family food use while protecting neighborhood quality of life.

We also call on community members, churches, organizations, and concerned residents to attend Village meetings, speak during public comment, and support this effort to protect food security and cultural traditions in Indiantown.

Conclusion

The Save The Chickens Act is not about opposing all regulation. It is about creating thoughtful, balanced rules that work for the people who already call Indiantown home. Small flocks of hens represent more than eggs — they represent self-reliance, tradition, and the ability of working families to care for themselves in a changing community.

We urge the Village Council to act with fairness and foresight. Reasonable accommodation for backyard fowl is good policy, good for families, and good for the future of Indiantown.

Respectfully submitted,

Concerned Residents of Indiantown

Save The Chickens Act Committee

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