

Greater Rockville New Business Checklist

1) Form Your Entity, Tax IDs, and Core Registrations

- ☐ **Register the business** (LLC/corp/LLP/DBA) with **Maryland SDAT** via Maryland Business Express. The state's start-a-business flow also reminds you about the **federal beneficial ownership (BOI) report** now required for most entities.
- ☐ **Get an EIN** (IRS) and then file the **Maryland Combined Registration** (sales & use tax, employer withholding, admissions & amusement, etc.) with the **Comptroller**.
- ☐ **Unemployment insurance (UI)**: open an employer account in the **MD BEACON** portal (Department of Labor).
- ☐ **Workers' compensation**: secure a policy (or approved self-insurance if eligible) before hiring.
- ☐ **New-hire reporting**: report each hire to the **Maryland State Directory of New Hires** within 20 days.

2) Annual Good Standing and Personal Property

- ☐ Mark your calendar: **SDAT Annual Report & Business Personal Property Return** due **April 15** each year (even if you own little or no property).

3) Location and Zoning

- ☐ **Confirm the use is allowed** at your address (zoning district/tenant-type). In Rockville, consult **CPDS** and the Zoning Ordinance; for unincorporated county, check **DPS/Zoning**.
 - ☐ **Home-based businesses**: Rockville and the County regulate HBBEs; County requires registration for "low-impact/major" home occupations. 4) Lease build-out and occupancy (City of Rockville vs. County)
 - ☐ **Know your permitting authority**: **Montgomery County DPS does not issue building permits inside the City of Rockville** (Rockville permits its own work).
 - ☐ **Rockville (inside city limits)**: apply for required **building/trade permits** (tenant fit-out, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, fire systems) and obtain a **Commercial Occupancy Permit** before opening.
 - ☐ **Unincorporated County (outside Rockville/Gaithersburg)**: obtain **DPS building permits** and the **Use & Occupancy (U&O) Certificate** prior to opening.
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5) Signs and “Grand Opening”

- ☐ **Rockville sign permit** required for new/alterd exterior signs; temporary “Grand Opening” banners are allowed with a permit (size/time limits).
- ☐ **Outside Rockville** (unincorporated County): obtain a **DPS sign permit** for exterior signage (illuminated signs also need electrical permits).

6) City/County Utilities & FOG (food/coffee concepts)

- ☐ **Know your water/sewer provider**: about **70% of Rockville** is served by the City; the rest by **WSSC Water**—rules differ
- ☐ **If served by Rockville**: follow the City’s **FOG (fats, oils & grease)** requirements and size/permit any grease interceptor through Rockville permits.
- ☐ **If served by WSSC Water**: obtain the **WSSC FOG (FSE) discharge permit** and follow WSSC maintenance/inspection rules.

7) Health and Alcohol (industry-specific)

- ☐ **Food service**: secure a **Montgomery County HHS Food Service Facility License** (with plan review). HHS coordinates with Rockville/DPS and will ask for your building permit/U&O context; some businesses also need a **Trader’s License**.
- ☐ **Alcohol**: restaurants and retailers apply to **Montgomery County Alcohol Beverage Services (ABS)** for local licenses.

8) Business/Trader’s License (retailers/wholesalers, some services)

- ☐ If your activity requires it (e.g., buying/reselling goods), obtain a **Maryland trader’s/business license** from the **Clerk of the Circuit Court** (apply/renew online).

9) Workforce rules Unique to Montgomery County

- ☐ **Minimum wage (as of July 1, 2025)**: \$17.65 (51+ employees), \$16.00 (11–50), \$15.50 (≤10). Adjusts each July 1.
- ☐ **Earned Sick & Safe Leave**: provide accrual/usage consistent with County law and guidance.

10) Environmental & Recycling Duties

- ☐ **Commercial recycling is mandatory** in Montgomery County (SORRT program); many businesses must also **report annually** on recycling. Build service into your ops and lease.

11) Opening-day Compliance & Fire/Life Safety

- ☐ Schedule and **pass final inspections** (building, trades, fire/life safety). Rockville's Permits & Inspections Division administers Chapters 5 and 9 for buildings and fire safety.
- ☐ **Display** required licenses/permits (Occupancy/U&O, HHS license, trader's license, sales tax license) and post required **labor law notices**.

12) Incentives and Help

- ☐ Explore grants: **Rockville Economic Development Inc.'s MOVE & Expansion Fund** (City) and the County **MOVE** program can offset leasehold/relocation costs (often stackable).
- ☐ Use **Rockville Economic Development Inc.** for site searches, fast-track guidance, and introductions to City permitting staff.