



HUMANE SOCIETY
— of Indianapolis —
www.indyhumane.org

**“I’ve found a stray animal. How do I find its owner?”
10 steps to help reunite a lost pet with its family**

- 1.) Check for rabies tags** or other information if the pet has a collar.
- 2.) If you’ve found a dog, walk it around the neighborhood asking residents if they know the dog.** If you’ve found a cat, keep it at your home and walk/drive the neighborhood and ask residents if they know the cat you describe.
- 3.) Bring the pet to a shelter or veterinary clinic to be scanned to look for a microchip.** Make sure the pet is scanned thoroughly. If a chip is found but contact information is invalid, ask the microchip company for additional contacts and where the chip was administered (e.g. shelter, vet office) to pursue other leads. Search the web for the owner’s contact information. If you don’t have internet access, find an internet-savvy friend who would enjoy helping a lost pet find their family.
- 4.) Place an ad in the local newspaper** – this is usually a free service! Cross check lost ads for a possible match.
- 5.) Place large FOUND posters** in the neighborhood where the dog/cat was found, at intersections, dog parks, convenience stores, grocery stores, churches, and anywhere an owner is likely to see a poster of their animal. Keep the text brief (e.g. “FOUND DOG, large, black, Call (123) 456-7890”).
- 6.) List the pet on major websites like Petfinder.com, LostandPound.com, TheLostPets.com, and CraigsList.org.** Post the animal’s info on your or a family member’s Facebook profile, and record and upload a video of the pet to YouTube. **Pictures help tremendously.** Cross check lost ads for a possible match.
- 7.) Contact local shelters and rescue groups** and provide your contact information, the pet’s description, and a photo.
- 8.) Contact local vets, groomers and boarding facilities** and send a picture with description and the location the pet was found.
- 9.) For dogs especially, ask the mail carrier** in the neighborhood where the dog was found if they recognize the dog.
- 10.) Keep an open mind and keep looking for the owner.** The owner may have given up hope or may not have cast their search wide enough. Owners can give up hope for various reasons and stop looking – but the more places their lost pet is posted, the more likely pet and family will be reunited!

Please remember that an animal’s condition is not always due to neglect – it may have been lost for a long time - and just because the pet is loose or unaltered does not mean the owner must not care and does not deserve to have the pet back. Remember that many pets escape their yards and homes in a variety of circumstances.

Most importantly, remember: everything you do to help the animal find its home can add up to a happy reunion!