

# Lost Pet Reunification: Text Messaging Program

## Staff & Volunteer Program Guide

Progressive animal shelters that understand the critical importance of reuniting pets with their families - or keeping them from entering the shelter system in the first place - actively build these systems into their operations. They integrate lost pet reunification processes into both staff responsibilities and volunteer networks.

Because of high call volumes and limited staffing, some organizations may struggle to fully implement lost pet programming. These challenges can be overcome by adopting a Text Messaging/SMS platform to automate responses and follow up with finders of lost and loose pets. This technology delivers instant information to the finder and supports shelter staff by streamlining follow-up.

A shelter can designate a trained volunteer to lead this program, providing them with a phone dedicated to lost pet communications. The number to text when a pet is lost or found in the local community should be well marketed and shared widely.

How the Program Works:

1. Dedicated Number - Provide one easy-to-remember text number for all lost or found pet reports.
2. Automated Response - The Text/SMS platform sends immediate instructions, including checking ID tags, scanning for microchips, posting on Lost & Found pages, and contacting animal control.
3. Follow-Up - A staff member or volunteer contacts the finder within 48 hours to confirm the outcome.
4. Point Person - Assign a volunteer or staff member to manage the program and device.

This approach improves return-to-owner rates, reduces shelter intake, eases overcrowding, and builds community trust.

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## Public Instructions for Lost or Found Pets

If you've found a stray pet or your pet is missing, text [TEXT NUMBER] right away.

You'll receive step-by-step guidance to help reunite pets with their families:

- Check ID tags and scan for a microchip
- Post on local Lost & Found Pet pages
- Contact the appropriate animal control office

This service is quick, easy, and designed to keep pets safe and with the people who love them.

Save the number, share it with friends, and help us reunite more pets in our community!