



Found Animal Guide

Thank you for helping lost pets find their way home! Studies have shown that most lost dogs are found within 1.5 miles of their home, indicating that a loose dog in your yard most likely has a home in your neighborhood. Studies have also shown that finders are successful in re-uniting the lost dog with their owner within 3 days by utilizing the resources in this document.

This guide will provide helpful tips to help you find the owner as soon as possible. Be a hero for a lost dog and their family.

Please be advised that it is illegal to rehome a stray pet without actively searching for the owner for at least 30 days. If you are unable to locate the owner, please contact Alachua County Animal Resources for further guidance.

Alachua County Animal Resources & Care Contact Information:

(352) 264-6870
acas@alachuacounty.us
3400 NE 53rd Ave. Gainesville, FL 32609

➤ **Look for a tag with contact information for the owner or a Rabies Tag.**

- ❖ Call the number on the tag. If there is not an answer, leave a voicemail and send the number a text message.
- ❖ If there is a Rabies Tag, contact Alachua County Animal Resources & Care to help track down owner information.

CAT FINDERS:

- ❖ Before getting started, does the cat have an ear-tip? If the cat is missing the top tip of one of his or her ears, this means the cat is likely a community cat, and someone in your area is likely caring for him or her. Ear-tipped cats CAN have indoor homes and may have someone actively searching for them, so you can still use the tips below as well as the Facebook Group, Gainesville Community Cats and Kittens.
- ❖ For more information about community cats in Gainesville, please reach out to Operation Catnip at info@ocgainesville.org.

DOG FINDERS:

- ❖ If the dog does not have identification on his or her collar, try walking the dog around the area he or she was found in. An owner could be actively searching the area. Ensure the dog is leashed and that the leash is secure before walking the dog.

➤ Get the animal scanned for a microchip

- ❖ Alachua County Animal Resources & Care, The Humane Society of North Central Florida, and local veterinary practices have microchip scanners available to check the animal for a microchip and contact the microchip company to get owner contact information.
- ❖ **Tip:** Ask the person scanning/calling the pet if they can also ask the microchip company for the implant facility, or the facility that originally administered the microchip. This may assist in tracking down additional contact information for the owner.

➤ Report the animal to Alachua County Animal Resources & Care

- ❖ Animal Resources & Care is the public intake facility for Alachua County and often the first place people go in search of their missing pet. Even if you can house the pet and look for the owner yourself, you need to report the animal as found.
- ❖ If you need supplies while you care for the found animal, Animal Resources & Care and can help provide supplies as well as additional resources and guidance.

➤ Post on Gainesville Pet Finder on Facebook

- ❖ With more than 20,000 followers, Gainesville Pet Finder is an easy, efficient way to spread the word about found pets and look through lost pet posts. The administrator, Angela, will also share additional helpful tips with you.
- ❖ Helpful information to include in the post can be the location you found the animal, when the animal was found, and the best contact information. Of course, you can post a picture of the animal as well, but we recommend leaving out specific details like the color of the collar or special markings, things only the actual owner would know.

➤ Create Flyers

- ❖ You want the flyers to follow the 4 L rule:
 - ✓ **Large** (as large as possible, including the information on the flyer. It should be visible from 25 feet away)
 - ✓ **Loud** (bright, eye catching)
 - ✓ **Limited** (minimal details)
 - ✓ **Legible** (easy to find your contact information)

- ❖ Keep in mind that pet owners may not know the technical terms for colors or patterns, such as brindle on dogs or gray vs brown tabby cats.
- ❖ Post flyers around the location you found the animal. If you found a dog, you may find the owner searching for their dog in that location.
- ❖ Flyers can also be shared with Alachua County Animal Resources & Care and local rescues and veterinary practices.

➤ **Post and browse on Lost and Found websites**

- ❖ www.24petconnect.com
- ❖ www.pawboost.com
- ❖ www.nextdoor.com (not specifically for lost/found pets but can help spread awareness in the community)
- ❖ www.lostmykitty.com, www.lostmydoggie.com
- ❖ www.fidofinder.com
- ❖ www.petcolovelost.org
- ❖ www.petfbi.org

➤ **Other ways to spread the word**

- ❖ If you live in a neighborhood or apartment complex, check to see if there is an email group, Facebook Page, or any mass notification system. If you live in a complex, ask the manager to see if any animals have been reported missing to the office.
- ❖ Contact local rescues and veterinary practices to see if anyone has reported a missing animal to their staff. While Animal Resources & Care is the only public intake facility, adopters or clients may reach out to their veterinarians and local rescues. If you need contact information for local rescues and veterinary practices, please reach out to Animal Resources & Care.
- ❖ If you have a found dog that looks recently groomed or know the dog is a breed that should be groomed, contact local groomers to see if they recognize the dog.

➤ **Reaching out to potential owners**

- ❖ If potential owners reach out, ask them to provide proof of ownership. This can include specific details about the animals, such as color of the collar or special markings, and pictures or medical records.
- ❖ Be accessible! Keep your phone on you, and check Facebook often in case the owner is trying to reach you.
- ❖ People with lost pets may use some of the resources listed above, but they may not know to browse through found animal posts or may not be actively searching depending on how long the animal has been missing. Explore older lost animal posts, and check for new posts often.