



# Lost Dogs Illinois Action Plan

*Don't give up! Although most lost dogs are home within a few days, many dogs are found weeks or months after they are lost. **Remember you are your dog's advocate.***

## Get Organized:

- Organize all current information about the lost dog (name, breed, description, wearing a collar, tags, microchip, current picture, etc.) Provide contact number and email.
- Immediately, place a blanket and/or clothing that smells familiar to your dog along with a dish of canned or tasty human food and water where he/she was last seen so your dog has something familiar to come back to & remain in the area. During inclement weather use a crate and bungee cord the door back.
- Mobilize your friends and family to assist you in getting the word out and searching for your dog. Assign one person to the point person for communications. Exchange cell phone numbers for quick contact.
- Change your home/cell phone messages – Let callers know to leave a detailed message if they have sighted your dog.
- Complete a lost dog report to have your missing dog listed with Helping Lost Pets and Lost Dogs Illinois: [www.HelpingLostPets.com/LDIL](http://www.HelpingLostPets.com/LDIL)

## Create Flyers and Posters:

- Print at least 200 full-page flyers (check your email from Helping Lost Pets for flyer templates) to distribute to businesses and to post in public places where people will see it. Use ¼ page size template so you can fit four flyers to a page for use in residential areas.
- Create posters using neon colored poster boards and post at intersections & your own front yard. Include a brief description, instructions “do not chase” and a contact number. We recommend using Helping Lost Pets Flyer template #3 Keep signs simple & easy to read.
- [Examples](#)

## Distribution of Flyers:

- Call local Chamber of Commerce or [Google Maps](#) to get a regional street map of area where dog is missing. Divide map into sections. Highlight and assign each section to a volunteer to distribute flyers. Use 3 miles radius to start. If no sightings, expand the search area.
- Use a separate map to record sightings of the dog. Record the date, time and exact location of the each sighting. Suggestion: use an excel spreadsheet or spiral notebook to record sightings.
- Each team member should carry tasty treats, water and a slip lead or leash.
- Walk and drive the mapped area, distributing flyers and hanging posters. Hang posters at intersections. Give flyers to delivery drivers (mail, UPS, FedEx, etc. bus drivers, and local

businesses. Pass out flyers door to door or place in newspaper boxes and post in every business/public place. Talk to everyone about your missing dog. **Note: It is illegal to put flyers in and on mailboxes.**

- Look for “found” signs.
- Remind your team not to shout or chase your dog if they see him/her. This may make your dog feel threatened and panic. Tell them to quietly sit or lie down (humans generally don’t lie on the ground – so it may invite curiosity), look away and lure the dog with tasty treats by throwing the treats to the side not directly at the dog.
- Post a sign in your front yard.
- Attach a poster to your car or use window markers to write on your car windows.
- Check your posters often, write Still Missing w/date or replace if they are removed or unreadable.

**Notify by Phone/Email or Fax** (be sure to include jurisdictions that surround your town/county). **Be sure to visit in person your animal control and/or stray holding facilities to check the “found” dogs.**

- Animal Control
- Police/Sheriff’s Department
- Animal service businesses
- Microchip Company
- Local shelters/Rescues
- Veterinarians
- Highway/public works department

**Post to Internet Sites:** (check other Lost Pet internet posting sites not listed here):

- [Craigslist](#)
- Animal Control FB pages
- Petharbor
- Your local shelter/rescue
- Neighborhood Facebook Pages
- Nextdoor.com

Be sure to check these sites for listings from people who found your dog or who may be trying to rehome a dog they have found.

**Place Print, Online and Radio Ads** (Also be sure to check found dog ads):

- Area newspapers
- Radio stations

***\*\*Social networking is important, but remember this alone will not bring your dog home.\*\****

**Visit Shelters:**

**Important:** If you don’t know where your city, township or county’s lost animals are held, call your local (non-emergency) police department for information. ALSO lengths of stray holding periods differ between cities and counties, it is important to find out what your city, township or county’s stray hold period is.

- Visit all county/city shelters in your county and in nearby counties if you live near the border.

- Make sure you visit ALL kennels in the shelter. Some shelters will have areas that are not accessible to the public for injured or bite dogs. You must ask about these.
- Post flyers in location or list your lost dog at the shelter. Check back often to make sure the flyer is still posted and/or your listing is still current. Also check posted “found” flyers.

### **Check Sightings:**

- Use a separate map to record sightings of the dog. Record the date, time and exact location of each sighting.
- If you start having sightings in the same area, put out items that smell familiar to your dog or you in that area. You can also add a feeding station and a trail camera in the area to verify a sighting.
- Avoid bringing in large groups to the areas where they have been sightings as they may scare a lost dog and cause him/her to leave the area.
- Humane traps can be used to trap a dog but make sure you have the appropriate size and know how to use it.
- Do not chase or pursue a lost dog. Chasing can cause a dog to run out of his comfort zone or into traffic. Sit or lay down; use treats to lure. Lost dogs are hyper alert and know when they are being pursued.
- If there have been no sightings, start from the beginning and expand your search area.
- Check Petfinder and Petango to see if your dog was surrendered to a shelter/rescue and has been put for adoption. Also check Craigs List Pet sections for dogs that are being rehome.

### **Once Your Dog is home:**

- Take your dog to a veterinarian to be examined.
- Remove all flyers and posters. Take down web postings and discontinue ads. Let all agencies you contacted know the dog has been recovered and thank them for their assistance.
- If not already, make sure your dog is microchipped and wearing tags on a secure properly fitted collar and harness
- Update the status of your dog on Helping Lost Pets website/lost Dogs Illinois by changing to Back “Home” at <http://www.helpinglostpets.com/mypets>

### **Websites for More Information:**

- [Lost Dogs Illinois](#)
- [Lost Dog Search](#)
- [Lost Dogs of America](#)