



## 48 Hour Lost Pet Program: Text/SMS Platform Recommendations

Organizations that experience high call volumes can overcome staff time constraints and other obstacles to implementing lost pet programming by using a Text Messaging/SMS platform to automate responses and follow-up with finders of lost and loose pets. This allows the finder to receive information on lost pet reunification quickly and supports shelter staff efforts to easily follow up with finders.

**Tip:** In order to comply with privacy laws, be sure to allow respondents the option to opt in or opt out of receiving text communications. Some of the platforms below include this language as standard, but if not, you may need to work this into your process (which is easy to do).

There are a variety of these services available to shelters of all sizes and budgets!

### Simple Texting

- **Pricing**
  - 500 outgoing texts a month - \$29/month
  - 1,000 outgoing texts a month - \$49/month
  - 15% off monthly discount for NPOs
- Up to 5 users per account
- Offers custom keywords for Finders to text (unlimited)
  - If you would like to use this service for other programs, you can create an unlimited amount of program-specific keywords to automate communication.
- Integrates with existing landline or VoIP network
  - Reduce confusion for the public. The number to text will be the same as your shelter phone number.
- **Feature: Automated text response**

Create a custom text message to be sent to a finder when they text a specific keyword to your phone number and create automatic and scheduled custom follow-up messaging. Initial responses will not require any day-to-day work from the staff. Follow-up responses will be case by case.

**Initial Response Example:** Finder of lost or loose pet texts “FOUND” to your phone number and would automatically receive a text:

*Thank you for helping a lost pet! Following these five steps will increase the chances of the pet being reunited with their family.*



# HUMAN ANIMAL SUPPORT SERVICES

**Step 1:** *If possible, secure the animal. Some pets are scared so be patient and persistent. If you cannot safely contain the pet, call animal control at [555-555-5555].*

**Step 2:** *Check for tags or injuries. If they have tags, call or text their guardians and set up a reunion. If they have a city registration tag, call the animal shelter at [555-555-5555] for owner information. If they have a rabies tag, call the vet office it originated from. Sometimes the owner's information is stitched directly onto the collar so make sure to look there as well!*

**Step 3:** *Take the pet to the shelter, local vet, or fire station to have them scanned for a microchip. If the pet has a microchip, look up the microchip number on Michelson Found Animal Registry (<https://www.foundanimals.org/microchip-registry/owners/>) and AAHA Microchip Lookup (<https://www.petmicrochiplookup.org/>). This will tell you the microchip company that the chip originated from. Call the company and ask for them to contact the owner.*

**Step 4:** *Hold onto the pet for 48 hours. Typically, pets don't wander too far from home so the chances are that someone is looking for them close to where they were found. You can fill out a Lost and Found Pet form so the shelter staff knows that a pet has been found.*

**Step 5:** *Spread the word! You can print found dog/cat flyers (<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1D3XgHHu2wpRcHQbze0Ztrmn4v2Wc4o2p?usp=sharing>) to post around the area you found the pet. Also post the dog/cat on Petco Love Lost (<https://lost.petcolove.org/>), PetFBI (<https://petfbi.org/>), Pawboost (<https://www.pawboost.com/>), **Local L&F Facebook Page (LINK NEEDED)**.*

**Follow-Up Response Example:** Send follow-up to Finders two days after initial text for a status update on a found pet. Staff may connect with finders who need support or surrender, but will not need to follow up for other options:

*Thank you for participating in our 48 hour lost pet program! Please respond with the following options to let us know we can support you and the pet:*

*REUNITED - I was able to reunite this pet with their owner*

*KEEP - I have decided to keep this pet.*

*REHOMED - I was able to rehome this pet to a friend or family member*



# HUMAN ANIMAL SUPPORT SERVICES

*SUPPORT - I would like to continue to care for this pet until an owner is found, but need help with supplies or veterinary care*

*SURRENDER - I was not able to find the owner of this pet and need to bring them into the shelter*

## EZ Texting

- **Pricing**
  - 200 outgoing texts a month - \$24/month
  - 500 outgoing texts a month - \$36/month
  - 20% annual plan discount available
- **Feature: Automated text response**
  - Automatic text response
  - Automatic and/or scheduled follow-up responses
  - See **“SimpleTexting” Automated text response examples above**
- 1 user per account
- 1 custom keyword for Finders to text (Can only be used for one program)
- Can integrate with existing landline or create new, local number
  - Reduce confusion for the public. The number to text will be the same as your shelter phone number if you have a landline phone system.

## Google Voice

- **Pricing**
  - Free with a personal account
- **Feature: Easy text responding**
  - Respond and send text messages through a web or mobile app, eliminating the need for staff to call every finder to follow up.
  - Response templates (see **“SimpleTexting Automated Text Response” section above**) can be copied and pasted as text messages to the finder through the web application.
  - **Example:** [Fresno Humane Google Voice L&F Follow Up -SOP](#)
- Phone numbers are generated automatically by the app. User has the option to select their preferred zip code.