



# How to help... *if you find a cat outside*

## Most cats are best left where they are

Cats wandering outside are usually not far from their homes and are unlikely to be lost. Research shows that cats are over 13 times more likely to be reunited with their owners if left in place rather than taken to a shelter. A cat that looks healthy with good body condition and coat is very rarely lost. We might not know where that cat lives, but good body condition tells us the cat likely knows where home is. A cat that is not injured, ill or in imminent danger is unlikely to need assistance.

## Here's how you can help

- If the cat looks healthy, please leave it where it is/put it back where you found it.
- Post a picture and description of the cat on NextDoor, Craigslist, Pawboost, Lost Cats of IL, helpinglostpets.com, et and surrounding neighborhood Facebook groups.
- Post "Cat Sighting" flyers in your neighborhood with your contact information and the date/time/location of sighting.



2741 S. Western Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60608

CACC is Chicago's only municipal animal shelter. It protects the public and promotes the humane care of animals.

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**More information**  
[Chicago.gov/CACC](http://Chicago.gov/CACC)

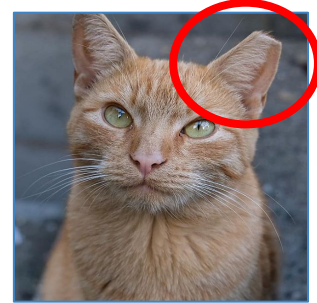
**MOST CATS/KITTENS FOUND OUTSIDE SHOULD BE LEFT ALONE.  
IF THEY ARE INJURED, ILL, OR IN IMMEDIATE DANGER:**

- Call 311 or visit [311.CHICAGO.GOV](http://311.CHICAGO.GOV)

## Community cats

While not all free-roaming cats have what we think of as a traditional home, if they are healthy and in good body condition, they *likely* have a place they call home. These cats, often called community cats, are *usually* not in need of our assistance.

If you see a cat with a tipped ear (see photo), it is an indication that the cat has been spayed or neutered and vaccinated. If a cat is creating a nuisance and is not ear tipped, Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR) is often the best way to help. If the cat has been abandoned, finding him a new indoor home may be appropriate.



## Trap-Neuter-Return (TNR)



TNR is considered best practice and is good public policy. It ensures no new kittens are born, stabilizes cat populations, provides vaccines, and improves cats' lives. It also stops the behaviors and stresses associated with mating such as yowling, spraying, and fighting.

Healthy cats can usually be returned to their location of origin the day after surgery. Plans for sick or injured cats should be discussed with the clinic. See below for names of low-cost spay/neuter clinics and organizations that support TNR in Chicago and thank you for helping cats!

More information on TNR: [www.bit.ly/tnralleycat](http://www.bit.ly/tnralleycat)

## TNR and spay/neuter resources

**PAWS Chicago** Focus: South side; Clinic: 773-521-7729; yluna@pawschicago.org

Outreach: feralneighborhoodcats@pawschicago.org; 773-475-9410

**Cats in Action** Focus: Southside/South Suburbs; www.catsinaction.org

**Tree House** Focus: North side; 773-262-4000; tnr@treehouseanimals.org

**Whiskers and Tails** Focus: Northwest side; info@whiskersandtailsfoundation.org

**TripleRPets** Focus: Southwest side/south suburbs; info@triplerpets.org; 708-738-1438

**Anti-Cruelty Society** Low-Cost Spay/Neuter Clinic; anticruelty.org; 312-644-8338

**Feral Feline Project** Focus: North/northwest suburbs; feralfelineproject@gmail.com; 847-800-0095

**CatVando** Focus: Near west suburbs; catvando.org

### LOST & FOUND PET RESOURCES

Helpinglostpets.com

Pawboost.com

Neighborhood Social Media Sites

Petbond.com

### REHOMING RESOURCES

Adoptapet.com

Petfinder.com

Anticruelty.org/ShelterBypass



Chicago Community Cats  
CACC Kitten on Deck

# WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A CAT



So you've found a cat outdoors—but unless they're sick or injured, there's likely no need to turn them over to an animal shelter. The cat may be an indoor-outdoor pet or a community cat who lives nearby. If the cat is truly lost, they'll have a better chance of being reunited with their family if they don't enter the shelter.

Many cats will get home on their own; others need some help. Here's how to provide the right help.

## FIND THE CAT'S OWNERS OR CARETAKERS:

- If the cat is wearing a collar, **check for an ID tag** and contact the owner.
- **Ask neighbors**, mail carriers and others who frequent your neighborhood what they know about the cat.
- **Take photos and file a found report** with animal shelters in your region.
- **Post flyers** in your neighborhood.
- **Use social media sites** such as Facebook and NextDoor to ask if anyone knows the cat, and search for "lost cat" posts to see if there's a match.
- If the cat is friendly, take them to a veterinarian or animal shelter to be **scanned for a microchip**, or put a breakaway collar on the cat and tape a note to the collar asking the owner to contact you.



A eartip is the badge of a sterilized community cat.

## TAKE THE NEXT STEPS:

- **Lost pet.** Tell the owners where you last saw the cat. Point them to resources at [humanesociety.org/lostcat](https://www.humanesociety.org/lostcat).
- **Free-roaming pet.** Tactfully mention to the owners that their pet would be safer indoors. If the cat isn't sterilized, share information on local spay/neuter programs and offer to help with the cost or transportation if you're able to.
- **Sterilized community cat.** Ask the caretakers if they need assistance, such as donations of cat food, a winter shelter or someone to feed the cat when they're out of town.
- **Unsterilized community cat.** Research local trap-neuter-return resources and work with the cat's feeders to get the cat sterilized, vaccinated and ear-tipped. If you can't find the caretaker, considering taking on that role yourself (find tips at [humanesociety.org/TNRindividuals](https://www.humanesociety.org/TNRindividuals)).
- **Nursing mom cat and kittens.** Visit [humanesociety.org/foundkittens](https://www.humanesociety.org/foundkittens) for guidance.