

# Did you find a dog? Are you wondering what to do?



Houston has an animal overpopulation crisis and there are few options for homeless or rescued animals. Rescue groups are overwhelmed with dogs needing homes and most of the city's shelters euthanize dogs and cats, even adoptable ones, because there are just too many of them. As a result, if you find an animal but cannot help it yourself, odds are no one else will either. Please be your own hero and help an animal in need.

**1. If you see a homeless or abandoned dog or cat, approach it carefully and give it food and water.** If it appears injured or sick, call the SPCA at 713-869-SPCA (7722) and report its location so they can pick it up; it might be euthanized but at least it won't be suffering.

If the dog is approachable and not aggressive, take it to a vet to scan for a microchip and get it checked out and treated for any medical conditions it may have. Most street dogs will have fleas and intestinal worms. Some may be injured or have old injuries; others may have mange, heartworms or be malnourished. If the dog is in good shape, it may be lost or recently dumped or abandoned by its owner.

If there is no microchip, distribute Found Dog flyers in the area where you found the dog and post the animal as found on the Houston Lost & Found Pets Facebook page. Post on NextDoor and other neighborhood specific sites and on your Facebook.

If no one claims the dog, get it vaccinated and if necessary, spayed or neutered. Assess the dog around other dogs, on a leash and indoors and outdoors to see how it behaves. If you think it is safe, assess how the dog interacts with children and cats. Now you are ready to find the dog a home.

**2. Finding a home for the dog.** If you can't keep the dog, you will need to find it a new home. Because of Houston's animal overpopulation, there are few humane options for it. BARC and Harris County Animal Control take in all animals but euthanize many annually. Other shelters charge a surrender fee and may euthanize the animal, perhaps the same day. The SPCA charges \$15 for an 8 week to 6 month old dog and \$35 for an older dog; they may waive the surrender fee in extreme emergency cases. The Houston Humane Society charges \$35 per dog with no exceptions. A rescue group may have room to take in the dog but that is rarely the case.

**3. To find the dog a home yourself, create a flyer.** Take some cute photos of the dog and write a short bio with basic information like its approximate age and breed, size, demeanor and vetting status. Describe how it gets along with other dogs, children and cats. **Then network, network, network!** Post the dog's photo and information on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Send it to friends, coworkers and relatives and ask them to forward it to their friends.

**4. If you find a potential adopter, check him or her out thoroughly.** Barrio Dogs can provide an application for potential adopters and you can use some or all of the questions. Meet at a dog park or other public area and ask the person to bring their own dog(s) if any. Ask about fencing and security in their yard, whether the dog will be kept indoors or outdoors, where it will sleep, etc. If you can, do a home visit. Trust your instincts; if the situation doesn't feel right, don't proceed with the adoption. Ask for photos of the dog once it's settled into its new home. If the adoption doesn't work out, please offer to take the dog back.

**5. Reach out to the mayor and other elected officials and tell them Houston needs to do more to address our animal overpopulation crisis!** Tell them you care very much about this issue and that we need a comprehensive and humane plan to address it. For contact information and a sample letter, go to [www.unityforasolution.org](http://www.unityforasolution.org).

**Best of luck and thank you for doing the right thing!**

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