

## SUBMISSION FORM

All submission forms must include the following information. Separate submission forms must be turned in for each eligible program. **Deadline: July 1, 2022.** Please include this submission form with the electronic entry. If you do not receive an email confirming receipt of your entry within 3 days of submission, please contact [Gage Harter](#).

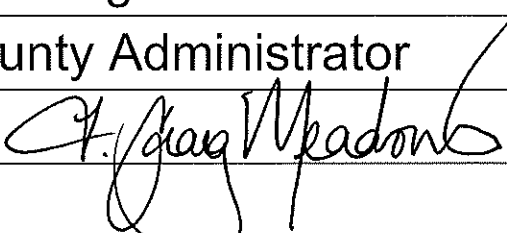
### PROGRAM INFORMATION

County: Montgomery County  
Program Title: Return to Home Program  
Program Category: Customer Service

### CONTACT INFORMATION

Name: Jennifer T. Harris  
Title: Public Information Director  
Department: Public Information  
Telephone: 540-381-6887 Website: www.montva.com  
Email: harrisjt@montgomerycountyva.gov

### SIGNATURE OF COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR OR DEPUTY/ASSISTANT COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

Name: F. Craig Meadows  
Title: County Administrator  
Signature: 

## VACo Achievement Awards | Customer Service

### Return to Home Program, Animal Care and Adoption Center

#### Overview:

Dealing with a lost pet is a challenging situation from every angle. The pet is scared, the owners are worried and scared, and the individual who encounters the unknown pet is often uncertain of the best way to approach or help the animal. Many times, the lost pets find their way to the Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center. At that point, efforts are made to reunite the lost pet with their owner.

Realizing there had to be a better way, the staff at the Animal Care and Adoption Center decided to implement something new – a Return to Home Program. The new program, which relies heavily on collaboration with the Animal and Control Officers, an online form, and a social media campaign, resulted in an 88 percent return rate over the last year, a significant increase from the 70 percent return rate experienced in when the Animal Care and Adoption Center first opened in April of 2017.

#### The Challenge:

Efforts are made when lost pets arrive at the Animal Care and Adoption Center to find their owners; however, in a large locality of more than 100,000 citizens, it is sometimes a challenge to find the owner of the pet. Many times, the staff at the Animal Care and Adoption Center use social media to assist with trying to reunite lost pets with their owners, not only by posting about lost and found animals, but also by trying to educate the community on lost and found policies, resources and ways in which the community can help.

One challenge is that the Animal Care and Adoption Center and the Animal Control Department operate independently. As a result, the need for increased communication and collaboration between the two departments proved necessary in order to help the program be successful and reunite more lost pets with their owners.

Finding a solution that was both helpful and efficient for all staff involved was vital in order to overcome this challenge. The Animal Care and Adoption Center staff worked with the Animal Control Officers in the field, encouraging them to try a new approach to lost pets in order to increase the rate at which the lost pets were returned to their owners.

#### The Solution:

In 2021, the staff at the Animal Control and Adoption Center implemented a new program to assist with the challenge of reuniting lost pets with their owners. Along with their typical social media campaign related to lost and found pets, the staff at the Animal Care and Adoption Center, in collaboration with the Animal Control Department, also rolled out an online lost and found reporting system. The new system allows for lost or found pets to be reported 24 hours a day, with photos of the pet, and connects directly to the shelter software used by the Animal Care and Adoption Center, streamlining the process and alerting everyone much faster.

The Animal Care and Adoption Center staff worked closely with the county's Animal Control Department in an effort to increase the number of animals returned in field. This was done by encouraging neighborhood inquiries and the use of microchip scanners in the field when possible. To

make it easier for the Animal Control Officers in the field, the Animal Care and Adoption Center staff assisted the officers in running microchip numbers and locating potential owners.

We were surprised by how well received the online lost and found forms were. In addition, we were surprised with how much more information we were able to gather about the animals, the area they were lost and how they went missing by using these forms.

### The Cost:

The cost of the implementation of the Return to Home program was \$0. The program utilizes existing staff, programs, and processes.

### The Results:

Creating an online lost and found reporting service, which links to the Animal Care and Adoption Center's software allows for more eyes on information and photos of found and missing animals more quickly, increasing the speed that animals are returned to their owners. As a result, there has been an increase in animals being returned to their owners by the finder, or by Animal Control using Animal Care and Adoption Center staff and the online reporting system as a facilitator.

### Percentage of Pets Reunited with Owners Since 2017:

- 2017 – 70%
- 2018 – 66%
- 2019 – 84%
- 2020 – 82%
- 2021 – 88%

### Success Story:

Near the middle of March 2021, a dog named “Tyga” went missing from a densely populated area of the county. The owner reached out to Center staff, was provided some resources, and then posted on a local lost and found social media page. A week later, Animal Control received a call for an older dog running loose on the railroad tracks; he seemed disoriented, and possibly injured. When animal control arrived the dog ran away, headed down the center of the tracks, seemingly unable to figure out how to get over the rails. After a brief chase, the tired and confused dog was picked up and carried back to the Animal Care and Adoption Center. His picture was taken, and then he was tucked in with a big fluffy blanket, and a much-needed bowl of water. Back at the computer, Center staff used the picture to search all the local lost and found pet sites. There, somewhat down the page was a photo of Tyga, a very similar dog, but the staff wasn't sure. The dog resting in intake was thinner, his nose was much redder and his eyes were so sunken in comparison to the dog they were seeing online. Also, the owner of Tyga reported him wearing a brown collar, but



this dog was wearing a silver collar. Closer inspection of the dog's markings revealed it was definitely Tyga! When called and advised of the dog's condition, the owner was so concerned he immediately rushed to the Center. It was a bittersweet reunion, as Tyga wagged his tail and licked his owner's face, his owner called the vet to get him checked over after his ordeal. The owner had never seen the collar Tyga was wearing before, and he may never know what happened to Tyga in those 7 days he was missing, but he was so happy to finally have him back where he belongs. Home.

**Samples of Content Created:**

**Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center** ...  
Published by Judy Jenkins · March 30, 2021 ·

Pet identification + Fast action = Happy reunions! One of the Center's main goals is to return every lost pet to it's loving family. For tips on proper pet identification and actions you can take to help get your pet home, please visit <https://montgomerycountyva.gov/animal-care/lost-pets>. #NPLHC #GetLostPetsHome

**When a Lost Pet is brought to the Center...**

- ✓ Scan for microchip
- ✓ Create social media post.
- ✓ Check lost pet reports
- ✓ Contact family.
- ✓ There's no place like home!

See Insights Boost post

👍👤 9 6 Shares

👍 Like 💬 Comment ➦ Share

Write a comment... 🗣️ 📷 GIF 🗑️



Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center ...

Published by Judy Jenkins · March 9, 2021 · 🌐

Did you know you can now fill out a lost pet report with picture included on our website and FB page. You can also find useful tips from online resources, making an effective poster and spreading the word within the community to help bring your loved one home.

Check us out at

<https://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/departments/acac> #NPLHC  
#GetLostPetsHome



[See Insights](#)

[Boost post](#)

  54

2 Comments 87 Shares

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**Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center** ...

Published by Judy Jenkins · March 16, 2021 ·

Did you know every dog and cat that comes into the Animal Center is scanned for a microchip? Thousands of pets each year are returned to their loving families because they are microchipped. Check out our website for helpful info on what to do if you've lost or found an animal. <https://montgomerycountyva.gov/animal-care/lost-pets> #NPLHC #GetLostPetsHome



# I was only lost for a minute...



## Microchip, because there's no place like home!

See Insights

Boost post

45

18 Shares

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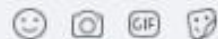
Comment

Share

Most relevant



Write a comment...





Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center ...

Published by Judy Jenkins · March 23, 2021 ·

So, you found a lost animal... NOW WHAT?? Check out our website where you can fill out a found pet report and attach a picture as well. You'll also find useful tips and online resources to help reunite this pet with its loving family. Check us out at

<https://www.montgomerycountyva.gov/departments/acac> and thank

you for being someone's hero! 🐾🐾🏠❤️❤️

#NPLHC #GetLostPetsHome

Dear Kind Human,

I was lost, so cold,  
and scared, but  
now I'm home  
because you  
cared.

Thank you for  
helping me find  
my way back to  
my family.

Love,

*Sammie*



See Insights

Boost post

👍❤️👍 27

32 Shares

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➦ Share



Write a comment...





**Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center** ...

Published by Shannon Porter · March 16, 2021 · 🌐

**\*\*UPDATE--Reclaimed!!\*\***

This bow tied Beagle was all dressed up with nowhere to go until a nice gentleman picked her up on Flanagan Dr. in Christiansburg. Please call 540-382-5795, ext. 1 if you are missing her!



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[Boost post](#)

40

1 Comment 62 Shares

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Most relevant ▾



Write a comment...



Mary W. Biggs  
Yes!!! 🍌

Like Reply Hide 1y





Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center · ...

Published by Judy Jenkins · February 27, 2021 · 🌐

This male cat was found on Copper Croft Run in Blacksburg. He is currently being treated for an injury. If this is your cat please call 540-383-5795.



[See Insights](#)


[Boost post](#)

👍👍👍 39

6 Comments 124 Shares

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Montgomery County Animal Care and Adoption Center ...

Published by Kelly Reed Stanley · March 8, 2021 · 🌐

\*\*\*\*UPDATE RECLAIMED BY OWNER\*\*\*\*

This sweet lady was found in the 900 block of Falling Branch Road in Christiansburg. Please call 382-5795 ext.1 if you are missing this girl!



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[Boost post](#)

   53

4 Comments 213 Shares

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Animal care / Lost/found pets

## Lost/Found Pets

Something pet owners never want to face is their furry companion going missing. One thing for sure is time is a factor, so act fast.

### If You've Lost a Pet

- Call your local shelter to report your lost pet. If your pet is lost in Montgomery County, Va., or surrounding areas, please fill out a [lost pet report](#) and attach a photo, if possible.
- Post your pet's photo/information on social media. (Be sure to scan reports for a finder's report.)
  - Personal Facebook pages
  - [Lost and Found Pets in the NRV](#) Facebook page
  - Local Facebook pages (For example, [Everything Blacksburg](#) and [Everything Christiansburg](#))
  - [Next Door](#)
- Post on other helpful online databases and apps
  - Craig's List lost and found
  - [PetFinder.com](#)
  - [PetFBI.org](#)
  - [FindingRover.com](#)
- Talk to neighbors and ask them to be on the look out for your pet.
- Advise local veterinarian clinics of your missing pet.
- If microchipped, report your pet missing to the company the chip is registered to and be sure all contact information is up to date.
- Canvas your local area with flyers (neighborhoods, vet clinics, local businesses). For a free lost pet flyer template go to [Pet FBI Lost Flyer](#).

### Things to consider when looking for a lost pet

- Lost pets may be frightened and hiding out of sight. Walk slowly while searching.
- Frightened pets tend to be quiet. While calling your pet's name, listen closely and give them time to answer your call.
- Search for your missing dog along walking routes that he/she is familiar with. Take along your dog's favorite food, favorite noisy toy, and leash.

### If You've Found a Pet

**Have you found a kitten or group of kittens?** Use the [ASPCA's "I Found Kittens Outside" interactive guide](#) for what to do next.

As a finder, it is required by law that you report the found pet to the local animal shelter or animal control. Also, as the finder, you have the option to keep the pet safe in your home while actively looking for the owner or seeking the help of the local shelter.

- Call your local shelters to report finding the pet. If the pet was found in Montgomery County, Va., or surrounding areas, please fill out a [found pet report](#) and attach a photo, if possible.
- Take the found pet to a local veterinarian clinic or shelter to be scanned for a microchip.
- Post the found pet on social media. (Be sure to also scan lost reports posted by the owner.)
  - Personal Facebook pages
  - [Lost and Found Pets in the NRV](#) Facebook page
  - Local Facebook pages (For example, [Everything Blacksburg](#) and [Everything Christiansburg](#))
  - [Next Door](#)
- Post on other helpful online databases and apps
  - Craig's List lost and found
  - [PetFinder.com](#)
  - [PetFBI.org](#)
  - [FindingRover.com](#)
- Walk the found pet around the neighborhood to see if anyone recognizes it.
- Canvas your local area with flyers (neighborhoods, vet clinics, local businesses). For a free found pet flyer template go to [Pet FBI Found Flyer](#).

### Things to consider when reuniting a lost pet with its owner

- If a possible owner is found, ask for proof of ownership, including:
  - Photos
  - Vet records
  - Veterinarian name and phone number.

[About the ACAC](#)

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Pantry](#)

[Lost/found pets](#)

[Resources](#)

[Spaying and neutering](#)

[Volunteer](#)

[Staff](#)

### Contact

480 Cinnabar Rd.  
Christiansburg, VA 24073

Phone: (540) 382-5795  
email [ACAC](#) | [directions](#)

### ANIMAL CARE & ADOPTION CENTER

Hours:  
Mon.-Fri., 11 to 6 p.m.  
Sat.-Sun., 11 to 4 p.m.

### ANIMAL CONTROL

Hours:  
Mon.-Fri., 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.  
Sat.-Sun., 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m.

- Always get the owner's contact information, including their address and phone number.