



Lost Our Home Pet Foundation, Inc.

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Lost Our Home Pet Foundation, Inc. was founded in 2008 as a grassroots response to the thousands of pets in need as a result of the economic downturn in general, and the Phoenix-area foreclosure crisis in particular. The recent economic crisis—the worst since the Great Depression—has led to a wave of foreclosures, evictions, and other related financial hardships, forcing many people to give up their pets. This is especially true in Arizona. This is especially true in Arizona.

According to RealtyTrac, although foreclosure filings across the country are down 27 percent from 2010 levels, one in 178 housing units in Arizona is facing foreclosure, the second highest rate in the country. In addition, high levels of unemployment continue to plague Arizona. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the state's unemployment rate has been hovering around 9.7 percent for the past six months, more than twice 2008 levels.

The economic crisis has consequences for the state's homeowners and workers, but it also has consequences—sometimes fatal—for the thousands of dogs and cats that are so often abandoned, relinquished to area shelters, or underfed.

LOH is the only organization in the Valley dedicated to rescuing pets abandoned, or at risk of homelessness, due to foreclosure, eviction, or other financial hardship. The most obvious recipients of our assistance are the pets we rescue, re-home, and feed; however, the mission of LOH is linked directly to the human-animal bond. As a result, our target audience extends beyond the pets to include owners, specifically:

1. Pet owners who are forced to give up their pets due to foreclosures, evictions, and other financial hardships.
2. Pet owners who, due to financial hardship, are unable to afford pet food and other pet supplies, and therefore may be relinquishing or abandoning their pets.
3. Pet owners who are forced to move because of foreclosure, eviction, or other financial hardship, and are unable to take their pets with them—but who are committed to keeping their pet(s).

The following is an overview of some of the programs and services that we provide to the community:

- **Animal Rescue:** We rescue cats and dogs that have been abandoned (often without food and water) in the wake of foreclosures and evictions, and also take in pets from owners who, because they are facing these circumstances, are forced to give up their pets. We place these animals in foster homes until they are adopted into permanent homes. Many of the pets we rescue have been neglected, and therefore require extensive medical care, which we provide.
- **Pet Food Bank:** The Lost Our Home Pet Food Bank is a critical program for families in need. If a family can no longer afford food and supplies for their pets, we provide pet food, leashes, collars, cat litter, treats, and other supplies—giving them the opportunity to keep their pets, rather than taking them to a shelter or, worse, abandoning them. We require that all pets receiving food from us be sterilized.
- **Free Spay/Neuter Program:** We provide vouchers for free sterilization for the pets of our Pet Food Bank recipients. Giving needy pet owners an incentive of free food if they have their pet sterilized (which is also free) is a great way to target and incentivize spay/neuter for the pet owners who need it the most.
- **Temporary Care Program:** We provides temporary care (up to 90 days) for pets whose owners are forced to move because of foreclosure, eviction, or other financial hardship, and are unable to take their pets with them temporarily. This program helps keep families together. We also require all pets in

this program to be spayed/neutered before being returned to their owner, and we provide vouchers to cover the cost if needed.

- ***Financial Aid Program:*** We provide financial aid for vet care if a pet needs medical attention and the pet owner cannot afford it. We have arrangements with several local veterinarians who give us significant discounts, and we require the pet owner to pay the first \$25.00. This program gives pets and their owners the relief they need so their pet does not need to suffer or be turned in a shelter because of financial reasons.

In our first 2.5 years of opening, we have rescued over 1200 cats and dogs, and fed approximately 7,000 more (allowing them to remain with their families). Animals are truly the silent victims of the financial crisis. It's no fault of their own and they have no say on what happens to them when their families are financially struggling and either abandon them or take them to a kill shelter because they could not take them with them when moving or afford to feed them. We vow to help those pets.

They say that rescuing one pet does not make a difference to the world, but it makes a world of difference to that pet. Help us make that difference.

Respectfully,

Jodi Polanski
Executive Director
Lost Our Home Pet Foundation, Inc.