

Hustle – AFT Program Overview

What is Hustle?

Hustle, our **peer-to-peer texting tool**, enables AFT leaders, staff, and member activists to have **personalized 1:1 conversations** with members over texts. Through hustle, organizers are able to quickly reach tens of thousands of members in times of crisis (e.g., disaster response) or work with smaller groups over a longer period of time (e.g., ID'd worksite leaders or social media activists). Unlike mass texting programs, members receive messages from an individual using a hustle-provided local number, not an anonymous impersonal six-digit code.

Why use Hustle?

Hustle **does not require a member to “opt in”** in order to receive your texts. Further, peer-to-peer text messaging yields better results than phone banking or emailing:

- **High read rates**, often within minutes
- **12-25% reply rate** (up to 1 of every 4 people you text will text you a reply!)
- **8-10% action rate** (people who reply yes that you toggle to a Yes in the Hustle app!)
- **Efficiency**. An extremely focused organizer can initiate up to 1,000 texts in just one hour, though we recommend planning on one organizer initiating 500 texts per hour.

People increasingly depend on text messaging as a primary form of regular communication. While **texting cannot replace a face-to-face conversation**, it is a powerful tool for initiating and maintaining relationships. Hustle can boost your outreach for things like: turnout for meetings, events and rallies; engaging members on surveys and issues; setting up one-on-one conversations; and more.

What are the highlights that make Hustle unique and effective?

- Because the Hustler must initiate contact with each person individually, it is not considered a mass text. This means that there is no requirement that the recipient opt-in, and thus vastly expands the available universe of contacts.
- Hustle will create a local phone number for the Hustler, so the recipient will be more open to communicate with the person contacting them.
- Hustle masks the phone numbers of recipients, so all communication happens through the Hustle app.
- Hustle automatically filters “text-able” numbers from landlines and VOIP. Exporting that data can help refine your member data in your primary database.
- All data collected through Hustle can be used for follow up, assessment, and other organizing purposes.

How can Hustle be used?

Hustle can enhance multiple aspects of your communication and organizing programs. Our affiliates are using personalized peer-to-peer texts to:

- Turn members out for a meeting, rally, or community event;
- Initiate and set up one-on-one meetings;
- Maintain relationships and develop leaders by having regular conversations and updates;

- Recruit volunteers;
- Drive internal surveys (including VAN/LAN survey integration);
- Mobilize members to call legislators or other campaign targets; and
- Supplement Get-Out-The-Vote efforts for contract ratification, new unit organizing and political campaigns.

What is Hustle not for?

- Hustle is not meant to be a replacement for mass texting apps or for one-way communication.
- Hustle is also not meant to replace crucial conversations that should happen face-to-face or via phone. Personal contact is still a key part of building relationships long term and texting is not meant to replace that. It can, however, be a valuable tool to set up and maintain those personal conversations.
- Hustle also should be used sparingly and should be tied to a specific campaign or long-term relationship building.

Guiding principles for affiliate use

- Plans should focus on relationship-building between your union and the members.
- Scripts should be short, friendly, and foster two-way communication.
- Always have a plan for one-on-one follow-ups (worksite leader or organizer).
- Commit to promptly responding to incoming texts.
- Train organizers on properly recording data.
- Ask for help. Our team is here to support you.

How to get started

1. Complete our national MOU (actionnetwork.org/forms/hustle). Contact hustle@aft.org if you have any questions.
2. Complete our hustle “getting started” survey, helping ensure your account is set up properly for your needs.
3. Register and attend one of our weekly web-based trainings. They are held every Tuesday at 5 p.m. EST.
4. Schedule and have a one-on-one with a member of our team to discuss the completed survey, ask questions, discuss data, and review your goals.
5. Send in your member data (in .CSV format)
6. Recruit your hustle organizers, write your first goal, and start hustling!

Questions related to organizing and program should go to hustle@aft.org. Inquiries related to data management and refinement should be directed to hustleDATA@aft.org.