

AFT Member Organizer Program

What is the member organizer program?

The member organizer program is designed to support our member engagement efforts through one-on-one conversations with members, leadership identification and development, and increased member activism. This program capitalizes on one of our most valuable resources—our members—to help build union power and activism.

Our members' abilities to draw from personal work and union experience to engage and activate potential members is invaluable. In MOP, union members are trained and work as part-time organizers to help increase capacity in their local unions. The program seeks to foster a culture of organizing, member engagement and accountability among member organizers, staff and local leadership.

Member Organizers are expected to:

- Spend 10 hours a week performing activities related to the project.
- Participate in trainings and team activities.
- Conduct small-group meetings, home visits and one-on-one conversations in other locations; listen to and talk with workers; make assessments; identify social networks and leaders; and move workers to action.
- Assist with the logistics for project meetings and activities.
- Help develop a personalized organizing plan based on targeting and training.
- Improve leadership skills in both the workplace and the community.
- Maintain and coordinate database information about employees for organizing purposes.
- Other duties as needed.

It is critical that expectations, job descriptions, and an in-depth overview of the job for member organizers are clearly communicated up-front during the interview process, hiring, and training, so the member organizer knows exactly what is required for the job.

Testimonials and Success Stories

“Our Member Organizer Program has allowed our local to offer workshops and conferences to the broader school community, developing bonds with parents and community members. **Through these connections, we have been able to raise awareness about the need to support our schools.** People will protect and defend what they love, and thanks to our Member Organizer Program, we have actually forged bonds of love and support for our schools and between our union members and our community members.” —Melinda Dart, President, Jefferson Elementary Federation of Teachers, Local 3267

“We’re seeing people we don’t normally see. Some people feel isolated at their workplace because they don’t see a lot of other people at work. **We’re one union. We’re one voice. We’re one team, and we want to help you and we want you to feel a part of this team.**” —Laura Calhoun, member organizer, Kansas Organization of State Employees

“I’ve always known that the work done by my union makes my life better on a daily basis. **Getting involved with my union and doing member organizing allows me not only to meet my co-workers, but to know that I am helping strengthen a union that benefits us all.** Face-to-face conversations with fellow faculty members are an important part of building relationships and remembering that we are all in this together.

We are stronger as a united group than we could ever be as individuals!” —Shayna Snyder, member organizer, AFT-Oregon

Here’s the process for building your member organizer program

1. Determine goals and priorities for your program.
2. Recruit and collect applications for member organizers.
3. Interview and role play with applicants.
4. Train and do initial ride-alongs with member organizers.
5. Develop weekly work plans and debrief member organizers weekly.
6. Share weekly debrief reports with AFT.

Expectations for the affiliate

- Assign one staff member to train, mentor, assign, debrief and collect reports with member organizers.
- Adhere to criteria for member organizers (see Member Organizer Criteria below)
- In conjunction with AFT, interview and role-play all applicants.
- Utilize AFT forms and training materials.
- Allocate money in affiliate budget for organizing materials for your campaign.
- Commit to share data from one-on-one conversations, campaign activities and leadership development with the AFT.
- Commit to share lessons learned and best practices.
- These organizers are part time organizers, and as such, should be considered employees of the local.
- Local Affiliates must designate at least one person to work as the MOP Coordinator. The Local MOP Coordinator will work with the AFT MOP contact person to support the MOP.
- The Local MOP Coordinator will be responsible for hiring, training, developing and supervising Member Organizers.
- The Local MOP along with an AFT Organizer will conduct an initial group screening as part of the hiring process.
- The MOP will work with an AFT Organizer to schedule ride-alongs with each MO before they go out into the field on their own.
- The MOP Coordinator will submit an overview of the campaign and/or issues that MOs will work to AFT. The overview should include goals and expectations for member Organizers.
- The MOP Coordinator is responsible for providing MOs with campaign materials necessary to perform the work. AFT will help develop and provide materials when planned and/or needed.
- The MOP Coordinator is responsible for developing MO through feedback and training. Training should be planned and based on developmental and/or campaign needs. AFT will be available to help develop and conduct training.
- The MOP Coordinator will make sure that MOs receive at least 3 ride-alongs during a 12 month period. (2 ride-alongs after the initial ride-along training). AFT Organizers will support and assist with field training.
- The MOP Coordinator will conduct weekly debriefs with the MOPS. There must be at least one in person group debrief per month.
- The MOP Coordinator will submit reports and data to AFT as specified.

Our commitment to the affiliate

- We will reimburse stipends for member organizers upon receiving time sheets and debrief reports for the period paid.
- We will provide all forms, training materials and report tracking needs.
- We will make data base tools and smart phone forms available for your organizers.
- We will provide experienced organizers to assist with training and ride-alongs.
- We will provide a national staff person to touch base weekly with your lead for this program and provide them mentorship and support, as needed.

Member organizer criteria

This program supports AFT's member engagement goals of identifying and developing new leaders. Participants in the Member Organizer Program should be newly identified activist and leaders. As we seek to build and expand our capacity, we want to recruit members who haven't been engaged or have held leadership positions in their union. Current leaders including Building Reps/Stewards, Officers and Activists are not the targeted population for this program.

- Member organizers will be recruited using information from staff, activists, local leaders, and based on their ability to perform, grow as organizers, and help achieve the goals of the program.
- Participants in the MOP, must be a current member of their local union. Non-members may be considered Only after becoming a member.
- Participants must submit a completed application and attend an in-person group screening including role-plays
- Participants must be willing to work at least 10 hours a week. There may be additional hours available on occasion.
- Participants must be willing to commit to the full term of the Member Organizer Program
- Participants must have a valid Driver's License
- Participants must have an insured vehicle and be willing to drive routes as required
- Participants may be required to work some evenings, weekends, school recesses and some public or federal holidays.
- Participants should have basic knowledge of data entry
- Participants must be willing to engage people they do not know via knock doors (house visit, canvass, etc.) or phones