

## 2024 Youth Poll: Hustler/Grinder Identity Profile

Power California (PoCA) and partners seek to mobilize young voters of color in their political campaigns in 2024. PoCA's research has found that young Californians have salient role-based identities that have the potential to be politically mobilizing. In this memo, we profile one of those top identities: **Hustlers and Grinders**.

Hustlers and Grinders (henceforth Hustlers) are people who have an identity that is attached to having multiple jobs, side gigs, or entrepreneurial ventures. They perceive this role identity as important and politically salient, suggesting mobilization potential. Most Hustlers live in the communities in which they grew up and are hustling to make ends meet, to avoid being displaced, and to become financially secure. Hustlers are somewhat civically engaged but have a mixed record of participation and efficacy. This could pose a challenge for mobilization, but other findings suggest it can be overcome. Hustlers remain optimistic about their and their loved ones' futures, believe in the American dream (that by working hard one can achieve their dreams), and believe that "they can make it on their own." A messaging strategy focused on these themes has the potential to mobilize this constituency.

### TOP ISSUES AND THE HOUSING CRISIS

PoCA's research shows that the Hustler identity is likely linked to experiences with economic insecurity due to the housing crisis. Hustlers perceive housing as the top issues government should address.

- **41% want government to address housing affordability.**
- **30% want government to address homelessness.**

Hustlers are experiencing economic insecurity due to the housing crisis in the state of California. These lived experiences are likely a contributing factor that shapes their identification as Hustlers, because they are forced to take on multiple jobs or side gigs to make ends meet.

- **47% of Hustlers blamed high rents as a barrier to finding housing.**
- **42% of Hustlers are living paycheck-to-paycheck.**

Hustlers are most likely to blame low wages, government officials, and gentrification as the causes of the housing crisis.

- **27% of Hustlers blamed the housing crisis on low wages.**
- **17% of Hustlers blamed the housing crisis on elected officials.**
- **11% of Hustlers blamed the housing crisis on gentrification.**

Many Hustlers have been displaced from their communities, considered leaving the state of California, or moved back in with family.

- **31% of Hustlers have considered leaving the state.**
- **31% of Hustlers have moved for better pay/work opportunities.**
- **26% of Hustlers moved in the last twelve months to find more affordable housing.**
- **22% of Hustlers moved back home with family.**

## SOLUTIONS TO THE HOUSING CRISIS

Hustlers strongly support policies to make housing affordable and help those at risk.

- **86% support state and local laws making housing affordable and protecting those at risk.**
- **82% support local rent control laws that would limit rent increases by landlords.**

## IDENTITY IMPORTANCE AND SALIENCE

Hustlers are most likely to perceive this role identity as important and politically salient.

- **34% of Hustlers rated their role-identity as most important.**
- **27% of Hustlers rated their racial identity as most important.**
- **85% of Hustlers perceive their most important identity as also politically salient.**

## RACE, PARTISANSHIP, AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Hustlers are disproportionately Young Black Californians relative to the state's demographics. While 5% of Californians are Black, 13% of Hustlers were Black. The percent of Hustlers who are Hispanic and Latino, AAPI, and White approximate the state's demographics.

- **39% of Hustlers are Hispanic and Latino.**
- **35% of Hustlers are white.**
- **13% of Hustlers are AAPI.**
- **13% of Hustlers are Black.**

Hustlers are more likely to be registered with the Democratic Party or DTS. 51% identified as Democrats, 34% identified as DTS, and 15% identified as Republican.

Power California's research also found that Hustlers are especially likely to live in the communities where they grew up, suggesting that they may be taking on side gigs, second jobs, and entrepreneurial activities to be able to stay in their home communities.

- **55% reported that they live where they grew up, while 32% chose to move and 13% reported that they were forced to move.**

This group likely has stronger attachments and a desire to stay and make things work in their communities. These findings are also consistent with the finding that gentrification was the third ranked cause of the housing crisis (11%). Campaign messages that emphasize local community may be especially powerful.

## CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE FUTURE

Hustlers have a mixed turnout record and overall civic engagement. 69% reported that they voted in the 2020 presidential election compared to 24% who voted in the 2018 midterms. 66% of hustlers

report that voting makes a huge difference. Relatedly, just 45% of Hustlers perceive running for office as a way to improve their community. These attitudes are more pessimistic relative to other identity groups, which we expect is likely an outcome of economic insecurity and the fact that their identity is tied to their financial situation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

PoCA's research suggests that Hustlers are a group that will need to be targeted with tailored messages about their local communities, the relationship between housing and their economic insecurity, and how institutional structures have shaped the housing crisis. This group will likely need to be convinced that it is worth their time to become civically engaged. We recommend using a positive messaging campaign since Hustlers are optimistic about the future.