

# YVO Issues Priorities Data

## YVO SURVEY CHARACTERISTICS

A joint project of Your Vote Ohio and the Ray C. Bliss Institute of Applied Politics at The University of Akron, the survey was conducted by the Center for Marketing and Opinion Research. It was a random sample of 1,037 registered voters in Ohio, administered 100 percent online between June 24 and July 15, 2020. The margin of error of plus or minus three percentage points.

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This document focuses on the core question batteries in the survey: a list of 16 issues synthesized from information gathered in Your Voice Ohio listening sessions as important to improving life in their communities and what Americans have said in national polls are most important this election year. The 16 issues are:

- a. receive equal rights and protections from the criminal justice system
- b. have their safety and health protected during the COVID-19 pandemic
- c. benefit from addiction treatment and drug control
- d. have access to jobs and income as the economy recovers from its recent downturn
- e. obtain necessary social services and public assistance
- f. benefit from international peace and security
- g. Are treated fair and equitably regardless of their race or ethnicity
- h. have access to affordable healthy food
- i. have access to high quality primary and secondary education
- j. benefit from environmental protection and response to climate change
- k. benefit from improvements in infrastructure, including highways and internet
- l. have access to adequate health care
- m. benefit from mental health services and treatment
- n. have access to safe and affordable housing
- o. can obtain a livable, sustainable income for themselves and dependents
- p. benefit from fair and effective immigration laws

To assess the importance to the respondent of receiving information on the issues, the respondents were first asked:

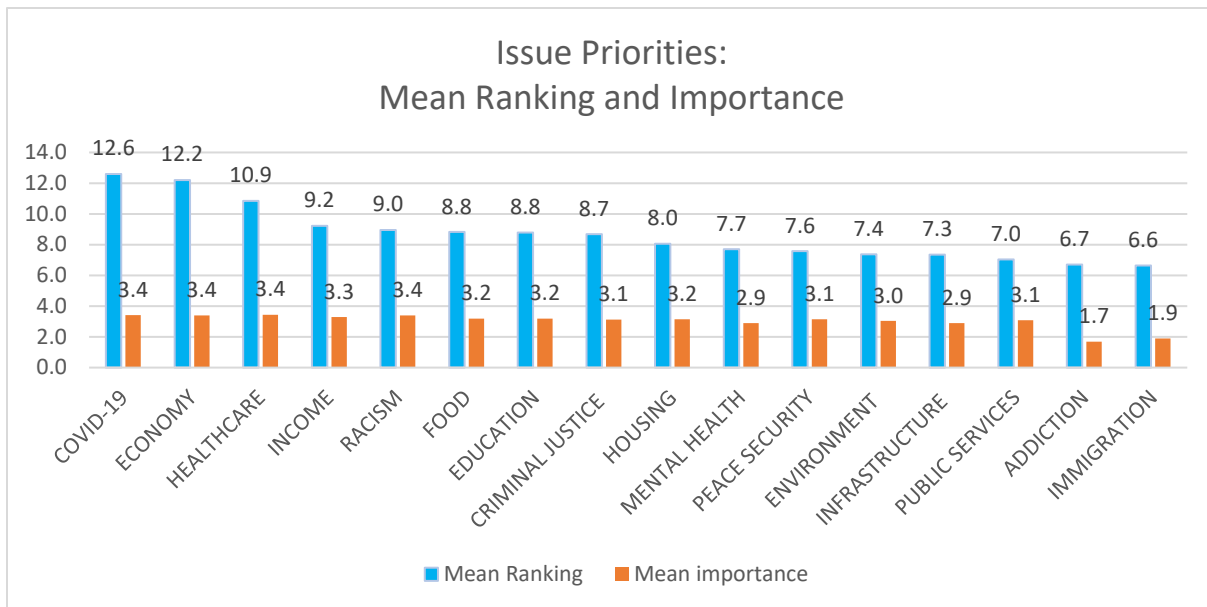
*How important is it for the presidential candidates to tell us how they will ensure that all people [issue]? (the response categories were very important, important, somewhat important, not very important).*

Then to assess the relative priority of the issues, the respondents were then asked:

*Thinking about how important it is that the presidential candidates address each of these issues, please rank the following issues from top priority to address to lowest priority. (The issues were listed in alphabetical order.)*

Both these batteries are focused on what people want to hear from the presidential candidates. They correlated with the “most important problem” identified by the respondent in an open-ended question (see paired files “YVO Most Important Problem Data” for details).

As the first sheet in the excel file reports the respondents’ ranking of the relative priority of the 16 issues.



- COVID-19 ranked first among the 16 issues, followed closely by the economy, with health care ranking third.
- The fourth ranked issue was sustainable income and fifth ranked issue was racism.
- The middle part of the ranking included access to adequate food, education, criminal justice, and housing.
- The lower portion of the ranking included mental health, international peace and security, environmental protection, infrastructure, public services, drug addiction, and immigration reform.

The importance of hearing from the presidential candidates on these issues is positively correlated with the ranking, but there is much less variation. This pattern reveals that most respondents want more rather than less information on all the issues regardless of the ranking of the issue.

There are some important variations in the rankings and importance of the 16 issues by region in Ohio (as shown in the second excel sheet):

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD	OTHER
Northeast Ohio	ECONOMY	COVID	HEALTHCARE	<i>Foreign Policy</i>
Northwest Ohio	ECONOMY	COVID	HEALTHCARE	<i>Food</i>
Central Ohio	COVID	ECONOMY	HEALTHCARE	<i>Racism</i>
Southeast Ohio	COVID	ECONOMY	HEALTHCARE	<i>Income, criminal justice, addiction</i>
Southwest Ohio	COVID	ECONOMY	HEALTHCARE	<i>Racism, criminal justice</i>

Respondents in central and southern Ohio had the same relative issue priorities as the state as a whole: COVID first, followed by the economy and healthcare. In partial contrast, respondents in northern Ohio ranked the economy first and COVID second, with healthcare third.

Each region showed some additional variation in the priorities of other issues. For northeast Ohio, the issue was international peace and security, and for northeast Ohio it was adequate food. In central Ohio, the issue was racism, and in southwest Ohio, racism is joined with criminal justice. In southeast Ohio, the issues were sustainable income, criminal justice and drug addiction.

The third excel sheet looks at the relationship of the issue priorities to a broad measure of citizen satisfaction: whether the country as a whole is on the “right track” or “wrong track” overall.

In June-July of 2020, almost two-fifths (38%) of respondents said the country was on the “right track” and about three-fifths (62%) said the country was on the “wrong track.” To put these figures in context, they closely resemble Ohioans responses to this question in April-May 2016.

The issue priority rankings show a diverse pattern of association with respondents’ perceptions of whether the country is on the right or wrong track (see below).

- Healthcare shows the strongest association with the impact on the perception that the country is on the wrong track, followed closely by racism.
- Although COVID ranked first in terms of priority, it had a lower, but still positive association with the perception that the country is on the wrong track. Other issues showing this pattern are sustainable income and environmental protection.

## ISSUE RANKING AND RIGHT/WRONG TRACK

HEALTHCARE	<b>0.20</b>	STRONGEST ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
RACISM	<b>0.19</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
COVID-19	<b>0.13</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
INCOME	<b>0.11</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
ENVIRONMENT	<b>0.11</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK

PUBLIC SERVICES	0.01	not significant
CRIMINAL JUSTICE	-0.03	not significant
MENTAL HEALTH	-0.04	not significant
HOUSING	-0.04	not significant
ECONOMY	-0.05	not significant
FOOD	<b>-0.07</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK
EDUCATION	<b>-0.08</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK
PEACE SECURITY	<b>-0.08</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK
IMMIGRATION	<b>-0.15</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK
INFRASTRUCTURE	<b>-0.21</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK
ADDICTION	<b>-0.23</b>	STRONGEST ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK

- Some issues were associated with “right track” assessment. Here the largest associations were for drug addiction, infrastructure and immigration. Weaker versions of this pattern held international peace and security, education and adequate food.
- Interestingly, some issue showed no statistically significant association with the right/wrong track assessment. In this regard, a big surprise in the economy, the issue with the second highest priority overall. Other issues with this pattern as public services, criminal justice, mental health and housing.

These patterns suggest that some issues drive discontent with the country’s direction (especially healthcare and racism) independently of the relative priority of the issue, while others are linked to satisfaction with the country’s direction (such as infrastructure and drug addiction)--and still other issues are not relevant to such assessments (public services).

A similar pattern holds for the importance of information from the presidential candidates on the issues and the respondents’ perceptions of whether the country is on the right or wrong track (see below).

- The first six issues are the same as with issue ranking (with the interloper of mental health which is second), showing associations with wrong track assessment.
- The next set of issues show a different pattern from issue rankings. For example, the economy shows an association with wrong track perceptions (instead of no significant association), while food shows an association with wrong track assessment (instead of an association with right track assessment).

#### ISSUE IMPORTANCE AND RIGHT/WRONG TRACK

HEALTHCARE	<b>0.19</b>	STRONGEST ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
MENTAL HEALTH	<b>0.18</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
RACISM	<b>0.15</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
COVID-19	<b>0.14</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
INCOME	<b>0.14</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK

ENVIRONMENT	<b>0.10</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
ECONOMY	<b>0.10</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
EDUCATION	<b>0.10</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
FOOD	<b>0.09</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
CRIMINAL JUSTICE	<b>0.07</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH WRONG TRACK
HOUSING	0.05	not significant
INFRASTRUCTURE	0.03	not significant
PUBLIC SERVICES	0.01	not significant
PEACE SECURITY	-0.05	not significant
IMMIGRATION	<b>-0.08</b>	ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK
ADDICTION	<b>-0.12</b>	STRONGEST ASSOCIATION WITH RIGHT TRACK

- However, immigration and drug addiction continue to be associated with right track assessments.

So there is my takeaways:

1. Ohioans think the country is on the wrong track, which is not at all surprising given all the troubles we face. Most are following the presidential election closely.
2. Ohioans have clear priorities for the issues they want to hear from the presidential candidates about. The top five are....
3. These issues are all linked to current problems: the pandemic, the dislocations associated with it, including the economy, healthcare and income, and the racial tensions.
4. But these priorities do not mean that people don't care about the other issues: in all cases, they want to hear from the presidential candidates—it is only a matter of the relative importance of such information.
5. There is a lot of diversity in Ohio. There are smaller "issue publics" that give each issue higher priority. These public are defined in part by region and demography (and politics?)