

In preparation for the design of a prototype for the *VoteLocal Ohio* app, an anonymous survey was conducted using Google Forms to gather information from potential users. Participants were asked to answer 11 questions regarding their voting habits, preferences, and methods for candidate selection. There were 40 participants that completed the survey, 38 of whom indicated that they are registered voters in the state of Ohio. Related to choosing which candidates to vote for, participants were asked about how and where they research platforms and qualifications, as well as their perceived confidence in choosing their preferred candidate for a particular race. Participants also had the opportunity to share open-ended information about their voting habits and preferences at the end of the survey.

The results of the survey showed a desire to have additional information about candidates for local offices, which is one of the anticipated benefits of the *VoteLocal Ohio* app. One participant shared “I liked doing absentee this year because I was able to view the whole ballot and take my time in doing research before voting.” When asked to respond to the prompt *I wish I had access to more information about local candidates and their platforms prior to voting*, on a scale of 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) the average response was a 4.2 (see *Figure 1*). When asked, *How confident do you feel when choosing which candidates to vote for in local elections (for example, School Board; Municipal Government; etc)?* using a scale of 1 (not at all confident) to 5 (very confident), the average response was a 3.45. In contrast, for the same question asking about level of confidence when choosing a candidate for U.S. President, the average response was a 4.08. This discrepancy further demonstrates an overall feeling of uncertainty when voting in local elections.

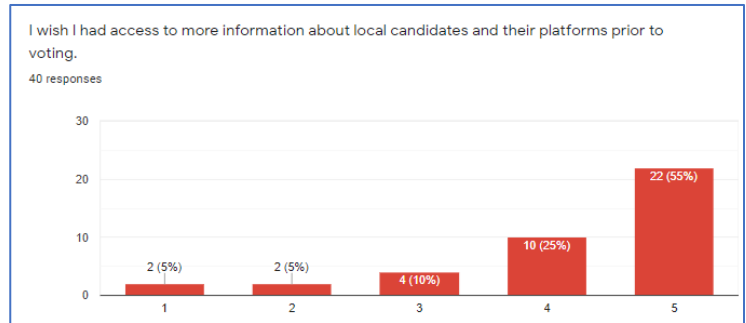


Figure 1

Survey participants were also asked to respond to the statement *When elections are taking place, I typically cast a vote in these races (select all that apply)*. Only 29 participants indicated that they typically vote in local/municipal government elections, as compared to 39 who indicated that they typically vote for the U.S. President. A large majority (72.5%) of participants said that they tend to only spend 1-5 hours researching candidates, platforms, and issues prior to voting.

These figures further demonstrate the need for easily accessible information to help voters feel informed at the polls, and encourage more civic engagement in local elections. One participant shared that they “...usually forget to vote for local/primary elections.” The *VoteLocal Ohio* app will be designed with a simple interface that allows users to interact with or without creating an account. The app will act as a support tool to help voters at all levels of engagement to quickly research and add “favorite” candidates within the app. With a built-in reminder function, users will also be able to set custom prompts to remind them of upcoming elections.