2025

ILLEGAL DUMPING SOLUTIONS REPORT

FINDINGS AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR A STATEWIDE RESPONSE TO ILLEGAL DUMPING

ILLEGAL DUMPING SOLUTIONS SURVEY
FINAL REPORT – 2025

Nate Miley, Erin Armstrong, Dr. Liz Maker, Demetrius Robinson, Grisel Piedra, Donovan Madden-Watson, Lawrence Ochoa

Alameda County Illegal Dumping (ACID) Task Force | 1221 Oak Street, STE 536 Oakland CA 94612

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Illegal dumping has surged in recent years, challenging local jurisdictions throughout the State. Despite high-profile cleanup efforts, persistent gaps in funding, staffing, and expertise remain.

In early 2025, the Alameda County Illegal Dumping (ACID) Task Force, led by Supervisor Miley, commissioned a mixed-methods study combining expert interviews and a statewide survey to identify effective interventions, barriers, and drivers of illegal dumping.

The team used qualitative interviews and a quantitative survey instrument to measure how indicators such as *Role* (education, eradication, and enforcement), *Community Type* (urban, suburban, and rural), and *Level of* Experience change the way barriers and interventions are viewed. Analyzing the data and examining its implications resulted in two (2) Key Findings:

KEY FINDING 1: **Broad consensus on Effective Interventions and Barriers** across quantitative and qualitative results, including *rapid response systems*, *targeted education*, *environmental improvements*, and *enforcement* (Section 3.1).

KEY FINDING 2: ***Level of Experience* is Statistically Significant** (Figure 1) for how practitioners approach illegal dumping solutions and barriers. Those with more experience were more likely to recognize systemic solutions are key to long-term change (Section 3.2).

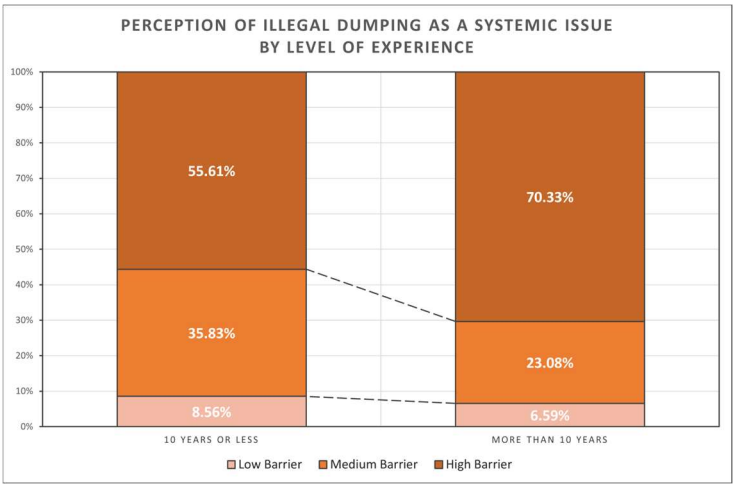

Figure 1: Illegal Dumping as a Systemic Issue, by Level of Experience.

Key barriers identified include a *lack of funding* and *limited manpower* (Section 4.1). At the same time, the *knowledge gap* (Section 4.2) highlights the risks of *institutional amnesia (Section 4.3)*.

Based on these findings, the report recommends three (3) actions for State and Local leaders:

- **INCREASE STATE LEADERSHIP** – *Coordinate cross-jurisdictional efforts, fund proven interventions, and disseminate best practices.*
- **BUILD DURABLE COLLABORATIONS** – *Retain and share expertise through interagency partnerships, knowledge transfer programs, and structured networks.*
- **PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESOURCES** – *Ensure stable funding, staffing, and technical support to implement, scale, and sustain interventions.*

These recommendations outline a comprehensive strategy for State and Local leaders that recognizes the systemic nature of illegal dumping and integrates expert perspectives to provide a framework that addresses illegal dumping comprehensively. Collectively, state leadership, durable local collaborations, and adequate resources empower jurisdictions to deliver fully coordinated, best-practice interventions that effectively reduce illegal dumping and enhance public trust.

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 ILLEGAL DUMPING: A PERSISTENT AND GROWING ISSUE

Illegal dumping has surged in recent years (Regardie, 2025), challenging jurisdictions across urban, suburban, and rural communities (Hohl,, et al., 2023). **Jurisdictions are struggling to keep pace** with the problem. In Oakland CA, for example, reports of illegal dumping increased 20% between 2023-24. (Sidhom, 2024). Despite increasing cleanup activity (Mishanec, 2025), the results have not been cleaner streets, because the rate of dumping has outpaced cleanup efforts (Miley, 2018).

The history of illegal dumping goes back decades (Du, Xu, & Zuo, 2021), and **the root causes are complex** (Hohl,, et al., 2023). Eradication programs are struggling (Syafrudin, Budihardjo, & Ramadan, 2023), and enforcement has not been prioritized (Green, 2020).

Because of its ties to economic and social political indicators (Sidhom, 2024), Illegal dumping disproportionately impacts low-income neighborhoods where environmental inequities and delayed municipal responses are ongoing. As a result, residents endure both a physical and psychological toll (Levin, 2013).

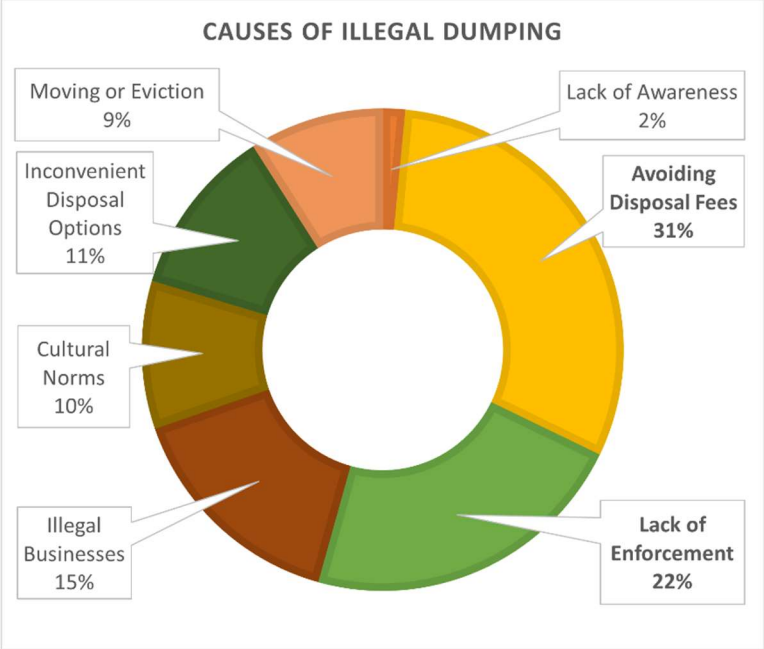

Figure 2: Causes of Illegal Dumping, according to survey respondents.

The underlying factors driving the surge in illegal dumping are varied and complex (Figure 2), and each requires a different type of intervention. The way a jurisdiction responds to *move-out* related dumping must be different than how it responds to *unlicensed haulers*. As Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley, who has convened an Illegal Dumping Task Force since 2016, described,

"THERE IS NO 'ONE SIZE FITS ALL' APPROACH—WE NEED COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS."

Comprehensive solutions are cross-jurisdictional, comprehensive, and informed by a deep understanding and expertise (Miley, 2018), and over the years, experts have identified and shared many best practices (Du, Xu, & Zuo, 2021), (Hohl,, et al., 2023). Unfortunately, the situation remains stubbornly unchanged (Levin, 2013), with illegal dumping continuing to pile up (Mishanec, 2025).

To better understand this dynamic, jurisdictions must examine not only which interventions are most effective, and why, but also what barriers are preventing effective deployment.

2.2 Purpose & Goals

In February 2025, Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley commissioned a survey of experts to better understand how communities can combat illegal dumping. The survey examined best practices, common barriers to implementation, and expert perspectives on the root causes of dumping. Drawing on this expertise, the study aims to inform more effective public policies and generate actionable recommendations for jurisdictions to adopt.

The team surveyed 375 illegal dumping experts from various *Roles* (education, eradication, enforcement) and *Community Types* (urban, suburban, rural). The survey then used the number of years a respondent had worked in the field to delineate based on the *Level of Expertise*. Experts were asked to rate the effectiveness of various illegal dumping interventions, as well as the difficulty of barriers to effectively addressing illegal dumping. The responses were analyzed for statistical significance and cross-tabbed to account for *Roles*, *Community Type*, and *Level of Experience*. This diversity is not incidental; it is what gives the study its value.

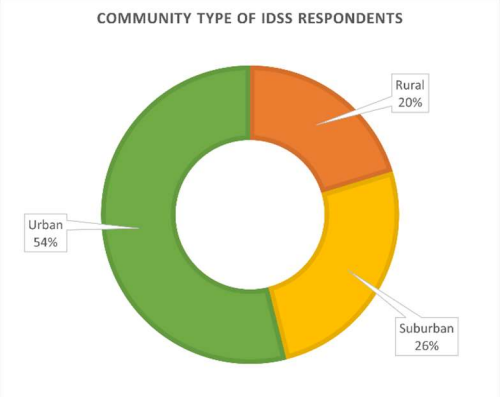

Figure 3: Community Type of Survey Respondents.

A full breakdown of the **Methodology is included in the Appendices** of this report.

- **Appendix II** holds the bibliography of works that support this report,
- **Appendix III** reviews the methodology for identifying significance and cross-tabulating,
- **Appendix IV** provides the complete survey instrument, and
- **Appendix V** reviews the qualitative interviews.

For those interested, the team will make all quantitative survey data available publicly.

2.3 Outline of the Report

The remainder of this report will guide the reader through the *Findings*, engage a *Discussion* about their implications, and provide *Recommendations* that jurisdictions from State to local can adopt.

Section3: Results: This section reviews the findings of the survey, including a review of effective solutions and barriers, many cross-tabbed by *Level of Experience*, *Community Type*, and *Role*.

Section 4: Discussion: This section discusses the implications of the findings, including implementation and knowledge gaps, institutional risks, and who's missing.

Section 5: Recommendations: This section provides a set of recommendations synthesized from the findings and discussion. The recommendations can be implemented across all levels of government.

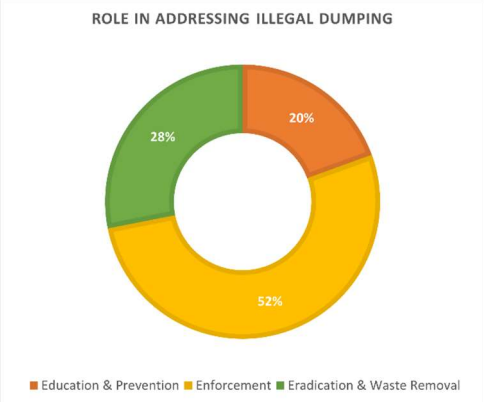

Figure 4: Primary Roles of Survey Respondents.

3 RESULTS

The survey results reveal two Key Findings. Firstly, there was a broad quantitative and qualitative consensus across a variety of interventions and barriers, suggesting the experts know what works and what is in the way. Secondly, these preferences diverged when cross-tabbing for *Level of Experience*, especially when discussing the systemic nature of illegal dumping. This section will explore both key findings.

3.1 KEY FINDING #1: BROAD AGREEMENT ON INTERVENTIONS AND BARRIERS

The survey findings confirm strong cross-sector consensus across survey participants, whether ranking the effectiveness of interventions or identifying barriers to success. This section will review major areas of agreement across prevention & education, eradication & waste removal, and enforcement.

3.1.1 Effectiveness of Education & Prevention Strategies

Participants were asked to rate the *Effectiveness of Prevention & Education Interventions*. Overall, every intervention received a net-positive rating, but the strength of the **effectiveness depended on how directly strategies targeted potential dumpers or dumping locations**.

For example, respondents rated interventions that directly targeted potential perpetrators as highly effective, including *Business & Landlord Engagement* (73.1%) and *Incentive Programs* (72.8%).

A similar dynamic was evident in *Beautification and Infrastructure Improvements* (75% effective), which ranked among the most effective strategies. Rather than targeting perpetrators directly, this strategy targeted specific locations to reduce dumping through environmental design. For instance, the Alameda County Illegal Dumping (ACID) Pilot planted 145 trees along a frequently targeted roadway. As a result, the pilot saw a "significant decrease in the volume and frequency of illegal dumping" (Miley, 2018) because of the beautification efforts.

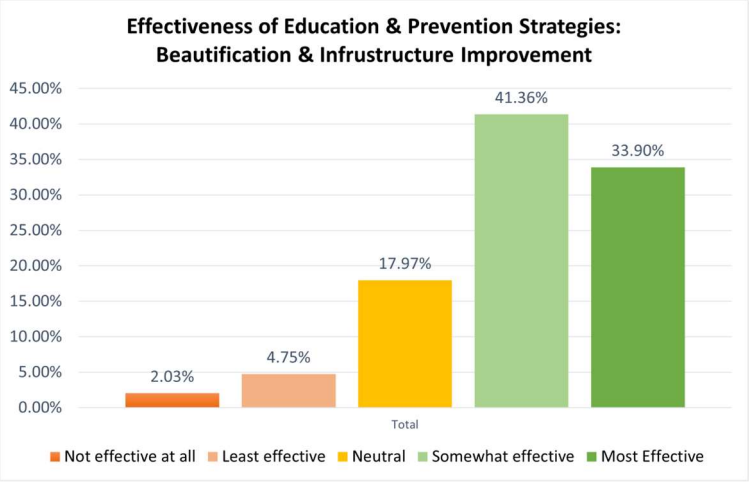

Figure 5: Effectiveness of Beautification and Infrastructure Improvements.

By contrast, outreach efforts focused too far upstream received mixed reviews. For example, 57.5% of respondents rated *School-based Education* as effective, but 17.6% rated it as ineffective, making it the lowest-ranked prevention strategy. Other interventions had similar negative ratings: *Door-to-Door Outreach Programs* (14.4% ineffective) and *Media Campaigns* (10.3% ineffective). Together, these strategies stood out for having the highest negative perceptions by several

percentage points, highlighting the challenge of achieving measurable impact when prevention and education interventions are targeted too far upstream or overly broad in scope.

Despite these mixed perceptions, respondents emphasized that **public education and prevention efforts remain essential.** Outreach campaigns and community programs, particularly when targeted, were seen as critical in building public awareness of proper disposal options and the broader impacts of dumping. As Edward Labayog, Assistant Deputy Director at the Community Development Agency, explained, "We do education about strategies to mitigate illegal dumping by protecting your property—get lighting and signs. We also give information about certificates for free dumping." This perspective underscores why prevention and education are widely considered a necessary complement to eradication and enforcement strategies.

3.1.2 Effectiveness and Barriers in Eradication Strategies

Survey respondents expressed broad agreement on the effectiveness of eradication and waste removal strategies, though the intensity of support varied across interventions. All strategies received net positive ratings, underscoring their perceived value, with differences emerging in confidence levels.

The most debated intervention was the *Adopt-a-Spot Programs*, which received a 55.4% total positive rating but only 13.3% marked it as "Most Favorable." It also recorded the highest negative rating (15.6%) and a sizable neutral share (29.2%), indicating softer confidence in its effectiveness. Several respondents suggested that "Adopt-A-Spot could be enhanced by offering monetary support to participants." Notably, perception of Adopt-a-Spot programs varied by Community Type, with the strongest support reported in urban areas and the weakest in rural communities—suggesting that density may shape the program's relevance.

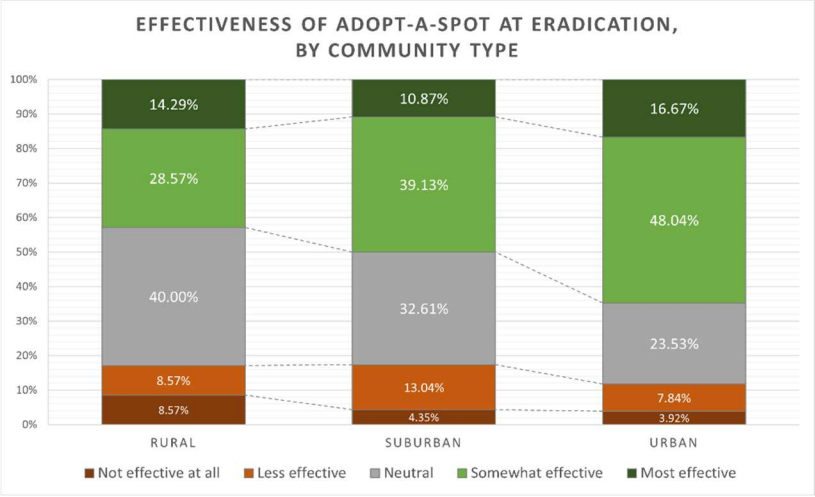

Figure 6: Effectiveness of Adopt-A-Spot Programs, by Community Type.

Tedd Ward, Director of the Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority, noted, "Adopt-a-Spot programs are great ways to match volunteers to cleanups in specific locations. In our rural coastal community, the wide range of possible dumping spots and our low population density mean that Adopt-a-Spot programs -- as good as they are -- just can't cover most of our terrain."

By contrast, ***Reporting and Rapid Response Systems*** **received the highest effectiveness rating** (81.6%), reflecting strong confidence in their ability to address illegal dumping quickly and visibly. *Restoration Projects* were also highly rated (74.2%), with respondents noting value in both beautifying neighborhoods and deterring future dumping.

The strongest agreement emerged when discussing *Barriers to Eradicating Illegal Dump Sites*. Participants were asked to rate a variety of barriers as either "Low Barrier", "Medium Barrier", or "High Barrier". Most barriers (*Access Issues*, *Jurisdictional Complexity*, *Hazardous Material*, and *Legal / Bureaucratic Delays*) were evenly split, with no more than 38.4% considered high. In contrast, *Lack of Funding* (69%) and *Limited Manpower* (67.9%) stood out as the most significant barriers, with nearly twice as many respondents identifying them as high barriers.

3.1.3 Effectiveness and Barriers in Enforcement Strategies

Survey participants were also asked to rate the *Effectiveness of Enforcement Strategies*. The interventions that ranked highest were *Fines and Penalties* (81.2%), *Surveillance Cameras* (77.9%), and *Increasing Patrols* (76.3%), which are all direct interventions targeted at catching and prosecuting perpetrators. The interventions with the softest effectiveness rating, *Publicizing Convictions* (57.4% Effective, 31.8% Neutral) and *Reward Programs* (54.8% Effective, 30.5% Neutral), were less direct interventions, focused on engaging the broader public either through deterrence or incentives for reporting violators.

Mirroring the findings in 3.1.2, the strongest agreement emerged when discussing *Barriers to Enforcing Illegal Dumping Laws,* with 75.3% of respondents identifying *Lack of Evidence* as a "High Barrier." Alameda County Inspector James Gordon noted, "We can't just use a license plate to write a citation; we have to prove that the person was the one who physically dumped the garbage on the ground. Without a confession or eyewitness, what seems like a slam dunk is actually a dead end."

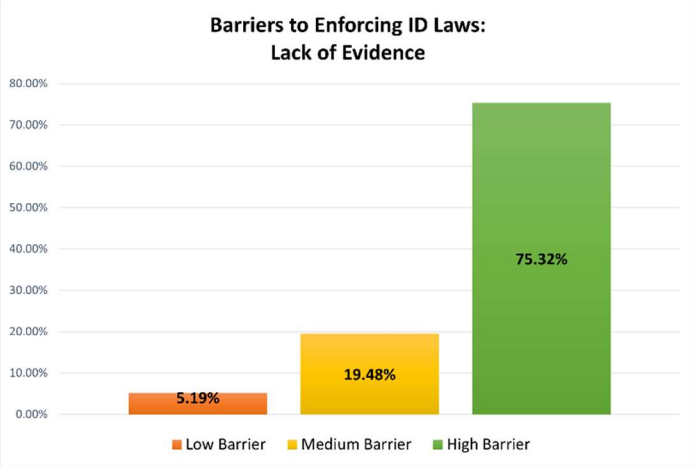

Figure 7: Lack of Evidence as a Barrier to Enforcing Illegal Dumping.

Competing Priorities (71.1%) and *Resource Constraints* (67.9%) were also considered "High Barriers" and directly relate to the challenges with *Lack of Evidence*. Taken together, these results suggest that, even where experts agree on effective strategies, evidentiary and resource barriers often prevent implementation. As a result, illegal dumping enforcement often takes a back seat to more urgent public-safety demands.

3.2 KEY FINDING #2: DIVERGENCE BY EXPERIENCE LEVEL

Respondents with 10+ years of relevant experience were substantially more likely to frame illegal dumping as a systemic issue, especially when discussing barriers, whereas those with fewer than 10 years were more likely to cite *disposal fees*, *lack of awareness*, or *individual apathy* as drivers.

3.2.1 Statistical Significance of the Divide

The Survey Analysis Team tested associations between experience level and key survey items using chi-square tests on cross-tabulations (valid N reported per item). Several differences reached a

statistical significance level of .05 or lower, meaning that there was less than a five percent chance that the observed differences between the two groups were random.

For example, rating "apathy" as a high barrier to reporting was more common among those with <10 years (54.2%) than among those with ≥10 years (40.0%) — χ^2 test, p = .041. Belief in incentive programs as the most effective prevention strategy was also higher among the less experienced (39.5% vs. 25.0%; p = .004). Likewise, "lack of evidence" as a high enforcement barrier was reported more often by less experienced respondents (78.8% vs. 68.6%; p = .031). One item approached statistical significance: describing dumping as a "systemic issue" was more frequent among the experienced (60% vs. 55.1%; p = .059).

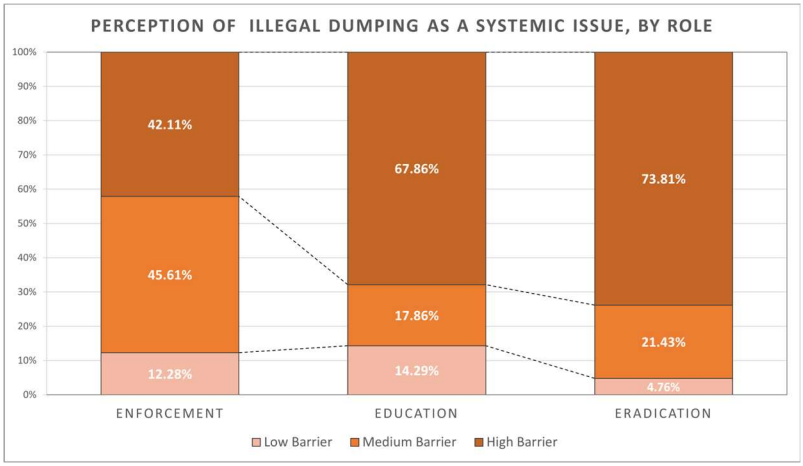

Figure 8: Perception of Illegal Dumping as a Systemic Issue, by Role.

One of the limitations of the dataset was that when the population was broken down by *Role*, the population for each role was not adequate to measure a significant difference. So, while initial data suggests a respondent's role may influence how they view a particular intervention or barrier, we suggest this as a future area of study.

3.2.2 Illustrative Qualitative Contrasts

Qualitative responses illustrated similar sentiment, with experienced practitioners consistently demonstrating a complex and nuanced understanding of the issue. This understanding helps to contextualize and texture the qualitative findings.

For example, John Medlock Jr., Deputy Director of Alameda County Public Works, and Doug Kobold, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC), detailed the issue. John warned against the assumption that "reducing the amount of dumping would relieve operational strain" and provided context for specific barriers. "Illegal dumping is not always the top priority," he noted, "unless it hinders public use or safety."

> *"We enabled them, because they knew we would come clean it up again. Without a big picture approach, you haven't solved the real problem."*
> Doug Kobold, Executive Director CPSC

Similarly, Mr. Kobold recalled how some interventions have unexpected outcomes. He recalled a pilot program that focused heavily on cleaning up illegal dumping quickly when it occurred, but failed to address the underlying factors and root causes. As a result, once the pilot was over, the dumping returned. The story highlights the importance of systemic solutions.

Both Doug and John stress that illegal dumping is not just a logistical issue--it is systemic. As Doug put it, "Without a big picture approach, you haven't solved the real problem."

4 DISCUSSION

The survey results confirm that while stakeholders broadly agree on the causes of and solutions to illegal dumping, consensus alone has not produced sustained progress. High staff turnover, loss of institutional memory, and lack of infrastructure for retaining expertise have repeatedly stalled effective initiatives, forcing agencies to start over rather than build on prior success. In addition, the absence of a unifying State role has left local jurisdictions working in silos and competing for scarce resources. Together, these findings underscore that lasting impact requires more than identifying best practices—it demands coordinated leadership and resources to carry forward.

4.1 THE IMPLEMENTATION GAP

The *Findings* revealed alignment on what works (i.e., *Rapid Response Systems*, *Infrastructure Improvements*, *camera-based enforcement,* and *Partnerships*) but also what isn't. Respondents overwhelmingly cited *Lack of Funding* (69.0%) and *Resource Constraints* (67.9%) as the most significant barriers across all intervention types (*Education & Prevention*, *Eradication & Waste Removal*, and *Enforcement*). This disconnect highlights an implementation gap: **jurisdictions know what to do but lack the capacity and resources to do it.**

One consequence of the implementation gap is lower public trust. For example, residents hear that cameras work, and they see cameras up at hotspots, but it's clear that no one is being caught. They're told that reporting and rapid response systems are the most effective way of cleaning up dumping in their neighborhood, but then it takes over a month to clean the spot, and a week later there is more dumping. **The result is frustration, skepticism, and a growing distrust not only in the solutions but in the agencies promoting them.**

The findings suggest that this dynamic may also be impacted by *Community Type*. When the data is cross-tabbed to review *Cost as a Barrier to Eradication*, a difference is visible. While 82.3% of Rural respondents rated Cost as a High Barrier, only 58.7% of Suburban respondents did the same. Urban areas split the difference at 69.6%. This suggests that costs may be less of a factor in suburban jurisdictions, and that Urban and Rural communities may struggle more with this barrier.

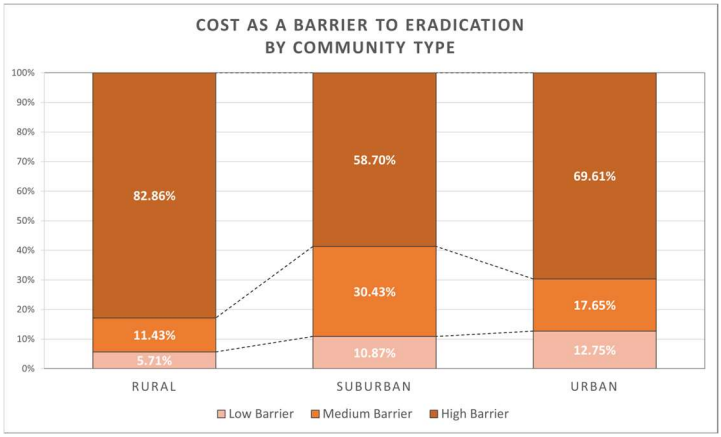

Figure 10: Cost as a Barrier to Eradication, by Community Type.

However, because this analysis split the Population into 3 categories, the data for each community did not have an adequate N to show statistical significance. We suggest that more research is needed, especially as the *Community Type* category has serious implications when viewing the issue systemically—affluence, community resources and investment, and other factors related to population. Future research could help guide investment strategies at the State and regional level.

4.2 The Knowledge Gap

One of the key findings from the survey was that respondents with more experience were more likely to see illegal dumping as a systemic issue. While this difference is minor, it is statistically significant, and there are implications from this knowledge gap.

Practitioners with less than 10 years of experience were more likely to favor tactical responses—short-term, targeted actions designed to address an immediate problem--while those with more than 10 years were more likely to think about the problem systemically, focusing on root cause and long-term structural issues.

That's not to say that one approach is better than the other; both are needed. Immediate solutions are needed to address the symptoms, and systemic solutions seek to address the deeper structural problems. Understanding this is important because it leads to comprehensive solutions.

Underinvestment in neighborhoods, for example, creates physical conditions (seclusion, blight, and lax enforcement) that make dumping more likely. A recent GIS-based study found that "built-environment variables are associated with dumping" (Syafrudin, Budihardjo, & Ramadan, 2023). In short, illegal dumping occurs in specific locations for a reason, and addressing the reasons resolves the dumping.

Without understanding this, responses might default to tactical fixes, such as mobilizing volunteers for a one-time cleanup. By contrast, a more systemic approach might augment that effort by partnering with public works to remove the dumping regularly and mobilize volunteers to plant trees. The latter approach addresses both the immediate and the underlying issue.

4.3 Institutional Amnesia

The *Findings* highlighted in Section 3.2 found that respondents with ten or more years of relevant experience are substantially more likely to frame illegal dumping as systematic. This finding implies an organizational and jurisdictional risk associated with institutional amnesia—where organizational memory and capability are lost when key staff and experienced individuals leave the organization.

SYSTEMIC THINKING: LITTER PREVENTION AT LOCAL SCHOOLS

A neighborhood school was giving juice boxes to students at lunch, and the small plastic straw wrappers were a persistent source of litter in the neighborhood.

A tactical response might have focused on adding more trash cans or hiring custodians.

Instead, a neighbor with decades of experience addressing litter, and a member of the Illegal Dumping Task Force, worked with the school to implement an incentive program: students who returned two wrappers received a small reward, such as a sticker or extra juice box.

This shifted behavior at its source, and the litter problem virtually disappeared.

This example highlights how experience guides the identification of leverage points that change underlying systems and behaviors, leading to more durable outcomes.

> *"I've seen jurisdictions circle back on ideas that we already know don't work."* Doug Kobold, Executive Director, California Product Stewardship Council

While the survey did not directly measure turnover, institutional amnesia is an interpretive risk, inferred from the findings and reinforced by interview narratives. As Doug Kobold observed, "I've seen jurisdictions circle back on ideas that we already know don't work", echoing a theme that recurred in our qualitative interviews and literature review.

One example came from the ACID Report (Miley, 2018), which documents an attempt to provide a free dumpster at an illegal dumping hotspot – a commonly proposed suggestion. The dumpster was placed on the corner and, within a day, filled up entirely. The next day, the bin was opened, and the garbage was dragged across a full city block. On day 3, the pile of garbage was set on fire. The lesson isn't that dumpsters are categorically wrong in every context, but that this specific use is commonly deployed with similar results—**they didn't need to reinvent the wheel.**

The Report describes the implementation of a camera-based enforcement program, which placed cameras on private properties near illegal dumping hotspots, reviewed the footage each day using a paralegal, and generated a case for a DA Inspector to investigate. In the first year, the program issued over 100 citations. The program was considered a major success and held up as a model for other jurisdictions to adopt.

Then a new District Attorney was elected, who didn't prioritize the program. Staff and funding were pulled from the program, and experienced staff left the office. Cameras were still catching footage of dumpers, but the program stopped issuing citations.

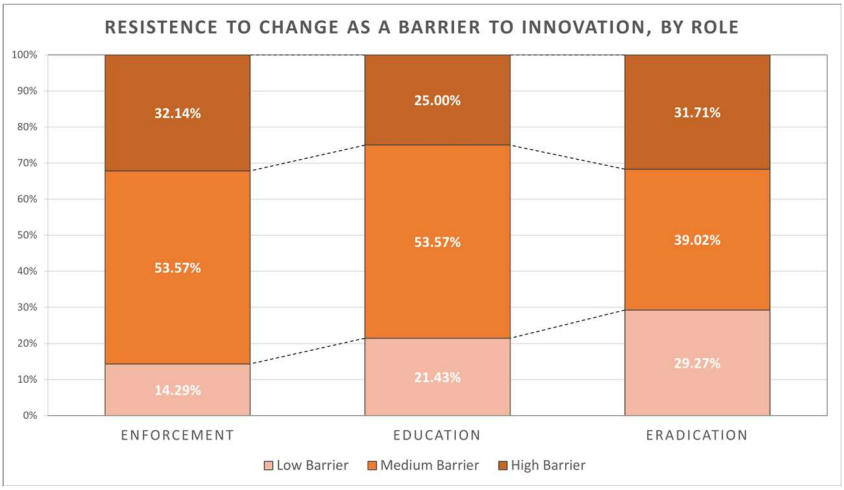

Figure 9: Resistance to Change as a Barrier to Innovation, by Role.

Two years later, that DA was recalled, and the Board of Supervisors appointed a new DA who expressed support for reprioritizing illegal dumping. Even so, the impact of losing key staff and knowledge became clear when some of the cameras needed to be replaced, because the knowledge and connections needed for procuring cameras, and the relationships with the private property owners, were gone.

"We're basically starting from scratch," said Erin Armstrong, Director of Policy and Strategic Initiatives for Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley, underscoring the findings and illustrating **it is difficult to rebuild an effective program once key institutional capacity is lost.**

Because the *Findings* highlight this specific organizational risk, we recommend this as a future focus for a targeted study. We also used this discussion to inform the recommendations in Sections 5.2 and 5.3, which are designed to retain knowledge and build institutional capacity.

4.4 The Missing Actor: Why the State Must Lead on Coordination

The issue of illegal dumping is complex and challenging for jurisdictions to tackle alone**.** The survey measured experts' views on the *Effectiveness of Partnerships* and *Jurisdictional Barriers* as it relates to eradicating illegal dumping. When combined with stakeholder interviews, these findings point to **a clear opportunity for stronger State leadership**: the State can collect and disseminate best practices, fund and sustain proven interventions, and convene cross-jurisdictional coordination to reduce gaps in knowledge and implementation.

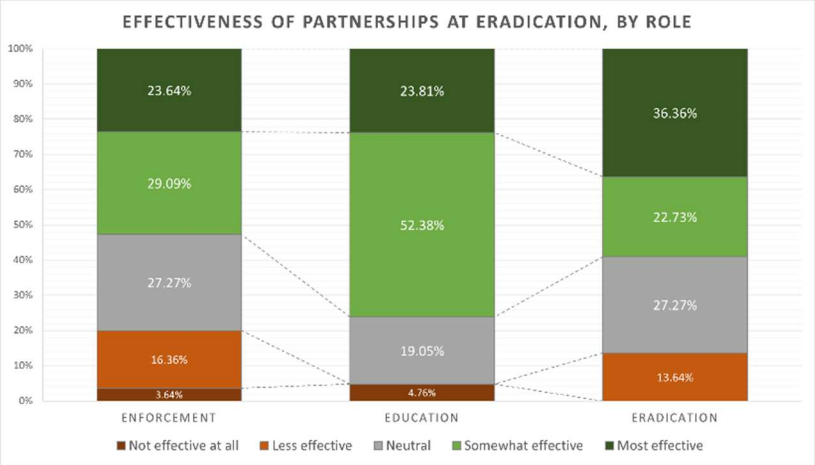

Figure 10: Effectiveness of Partnerships in Eradication, by Role.

Across the board, respondents rated *partnerships* as effective in removing illegal dumping quickly and effectively. When cross-tabbed for *Role*, the *Education* (76.2%) role was most supportive of partnerships, with *Enforcement* (52.7%) and *Eradication* (59.1%), suggesting there may be a particularly important role for partnerships in education and prevention efforts.

This is particularly important in the public sector, where central leadership is required to convene stakeholders and address the issue comprehensively. Without centralized leadership on the issue, **jurisdictions are responding alone**. That's not to say that Counties and regions aren't coordinating locally; these collaborations operate in silos. Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley has hosted an Illegal Dumping Task Force since 2016. During the pandemic, the Task Force went virtual and expanded, almost overnight, to a statewide audience, explained Erin Armstrong, who coordinates the monthly task force meeting. "But what happens when we're not in here anymore?" she questioned, adding, "This isn't a durable solution."

Since then, many counties and regional efforts have sprung up across the State, and without coordination, **isolated jurisdictions risk a fractured and uninformed response**. Jurisdictional boundaries will complicate efforts to address illegal dumping, shuffling the problem from place to place without addressing the underlying cause. At the same time, counties and regional bodies only have the authority to convene collaboration within their jurisdiction.

This illuminates an opportunity for the State to strategically address the knowledge and implementation gaps identified above, because **the State is the only body with the jurisdictional scale and resources to provide statewide leadership and coordination.** Collecting, sharing, and funding best practices address many of the barriers found in this survey, while promoting effective solutions. Coordinating county and regional efforts helps to address knowledge and implementation gaps and mitigates the risk of institutional amnesia.

These are tasks the State is uniquely positioned for. Without them local efforts struggle in isolation.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The survey's *Findings* confirm that illegal dumping is a systemic, complex problem that cannot be addressed through isolated or short-term efforts. Persistent barriers—including *lack of funding*, *limited manpower*, and gaps in institutional knowledge—undermine even well-designed interventions (Section 3, Results). Survey respondents emphasized that while stakeholders broadly agree on effective strategies, the implementation and knowledge gaps remain critical obstacles (Section 4, Discussion). Therefore, to achieve lasting progress across the State, this report and the ACID Task Force recommend the following three (3) interconnected actions:

1. ***INCREASE STATE LEADERSHIP IN COORDINATING AND FUNDING INTERVENTIONS***
2. ***BUILD DURABLE COLLABORATIONS TO RETAIN EXPERTISE***
3. ***PROVIDE ADEQUATE RESOURCES TO SUPPORT PROVEN INTERVENTIONS***

These recommendations are mutually reinforcing, with coordinated statewide leadership enabling local partnerships to thrive. This structure ensures that investments in interventions are effective.

5.1 INCREASE STATE LEADERSHIP IN COORDINATING AND FUNDING INTERVENTIONS

Illegal dumping spans city and county boundaries, creating challenges that individual jurisdictions cannot solve alone. Survey respondents consistently identified the importance of partnerships in comprehensive solutions, but local task forces, while effective in their areas, operate in silos.

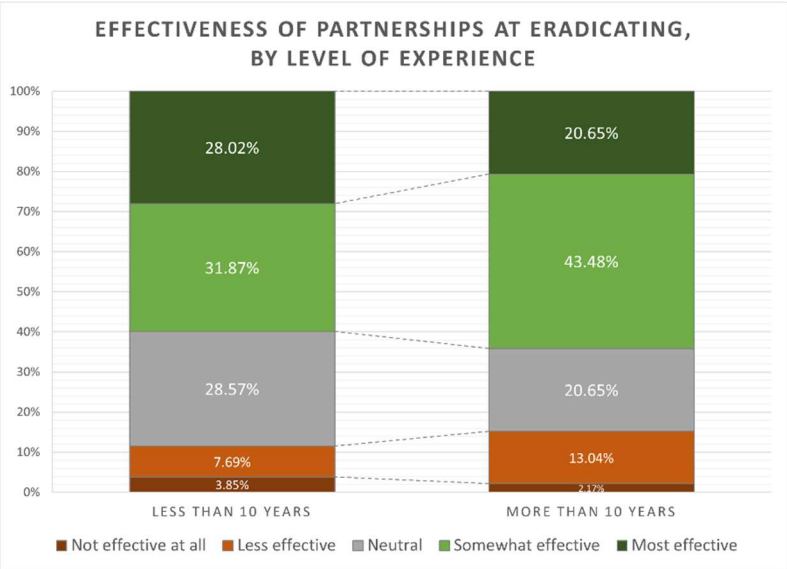

Figure 11: Effectiveness of Partnerships at Eradication, by Level of Experience.

Without statewide coordination, jurisdictions risk duplicating efforts, reinventing the wheel, and struggling against resource and knowledge gaps.

State leaders can address these challenges by:

- *Convening and coordinating local efforts.*
- *Collecting, disseminating, and funding best practices.*
- *Supporting shared databases to track illegal dumping interventions and outcomes.*

By establishing a clear, unifying role for the State, these measures ensure that local interventions are reinforced rather than undermined, and that knowledge and resources are deployed strategically across regions, effectively addressing the concerns discussed in Section 4.4.

5.2 Build Durable Collaborations to Retain Expertise

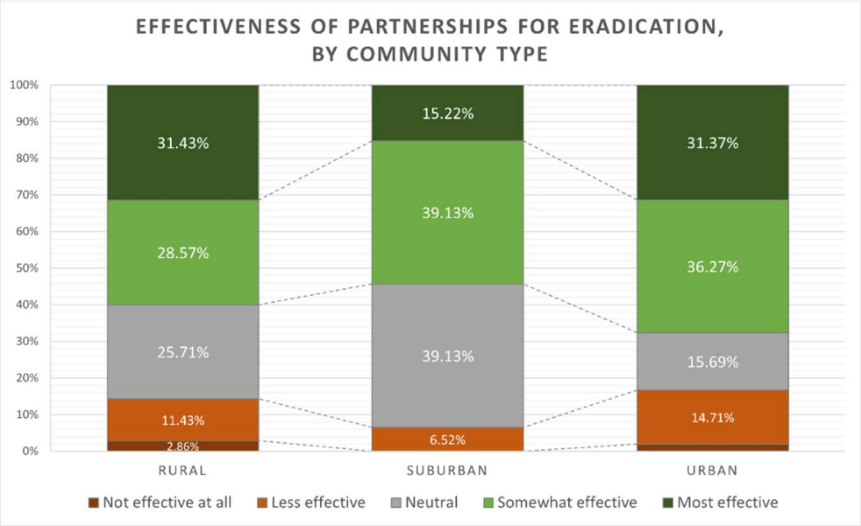

Figure 12: Effectiveness of Partnerships, by Community Type.

Institutional amnesia (Section 4.3) highlights a pitfall inherent in the *Findings* (Section 3.2). Experienced practitioners understand the systemic drivers of dumping and prioritize interventions that address the issue comprehensively, acknowledging the complex causes. To preserve this, jurisdictions should establish durable mechanisms to retain and share expertise, including:

- *Interagency partnerships that facilitate regular data sharing and strategy discussions.*
- *Structured knowledge transfer programs, such as peer networks, cross-training, and documentation of best practices.*
- *Leveraging existing models like the Illegal Dumping Technical Advisory Committee (IDTAC), and Statewide Conference on Illegal Dumping (IDCon), which sustain and share expertise.*

By institutionalizing knowledge and partnerships, agencies can maintain momentum, ensure continuity of effective interventions, and reduce the risk that progress is lost with staff transitions.

5.3 Provide Adequate Resources to Support Proven Interventions

Survey results identified funding and staffing as the most significant barriers to effective illegal dumping interventions (Section 3.1.2 & 3.1.3). Effective solutions—including *Rapid Response Systems*, *camera-based enforcement*, and *targeted education programs*—require stable and sufficient resources to be implemented and maintained. Adequate funding, staffing, and technical support are essential to:

- *Expand successful programs to meet the scale of the problem.*
- *Maintain consistent operations, preventing the cycle of programs starting and stopping that undermines public trust (Section 4.1).*
- *Support evidence-based interventions that have demonstrated measurable impact, such as the ACID pilot beautification and camera enforcement programs.*

Ensuring that interventions are adequately resourced enables local and regional programs to operate consistently and at scale, while aligning with the frameworks established through state leadership and strengthened by knowledge-sharing partnerships.

Appendices

I ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This report would not be possible without the **375 illegal dumping professionals**, who shared their knowledge and expertise. This report is based entirely on their feedback.

The ACID Survey Team conducted the survey, analyzed the data, and produced the Final Report:

Nate Miley, District 4 County Supervisor, Alameda County
Erin Armstrong, Director of Policy & Strategic Initiatives, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Dr. Liz Maker, Evaluation Manager, CAPE, Alameda County Public Health Department
Demetrius Robinson, Project Assistant, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Grisel Piedra, Supervisor's Assistant, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Donovan McFadden, Program Intern, Alameda County Board of Supervisors
Lawrence Ochoa, Program Intern, Alameda County Board of Supervisors

We also thank our **qualitative interview participants**, whose perspectives helped us to better interpret the IDSS quantitative responses. Listed in alphabetical order by last name.

James Gordon, Inspector, Alameda County District Attorney's Office
Doug Kobold, Executive Director, California Product Stewardship Council (CPSC)
Edward Labayog, Assistant Deputy Director, Community Development Agency
John Medlock Jr., Deputy Director, Alameda County Public Works

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Stephanie L. Becker, Illegal Dumping Analyst, IDTAC, CalRecycle
Larry Sweetser, IDTAC Chair
Tedd Ward, M.S., Director, Del Norte Solid Waste Management Authority

This report would not be possible without **Supervisor Miley**, who has been picking up trash since he was a cub scout, and the **Alameda County Illegal Dumping (ACID) Task Force**, which has been bringing people together to end illegal dumping since 2016 and has grown to over 600 members.

To the hundreds of professionals who contributed to this report, thank you!

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III METHODOLOGY

III.A SURVEY DESIGN AND RESPONDENT PROFILE

This study employed a mixed-methods approach combining qualitative stakeholder interviews with a large-scale survey. Stakeholder interviews were used to inform the survey instrument and interpretive framework, while the survey provided a broad quantitative perspective across disciplines, sectors, and geographies. Together, these methods ensured that the findings are grounded in both professional expertise and lived practice.

III.A.i Stakeholder Interviews

In the early phases of the project, we conducted in-depth interviews with a targeted group of experts representing the three strategic pillars of illegal dumping intervention: education / prevention, eradication / operations, and enforcement. Participants included city and county public works staff, law enforcement officers, environmental health officials, nonprofit leaders, and private-sector contractors. Collectively, they brought decades of professional and field-based experience.

Interviewees emphasized the importance of probing not only what works in addressing illegal dumping, but also what the primary barriers are to successful interventions.

They highlighted systemic drivers such as cultural norms, competing enforcement priorities, and the challenges of not only cleaning up illegal dumping but going further to outright prevent it.

The qualitative data generated from these interviews directly shaped the survey instrument and provided the interpretive lens through which survey results were later analyzed.

III.A.ii Survey Design

Building on the interviews, the research team developed a comprehensive set of survey questions aimed at capturing stakeholder perspectives on illegal dumping. The survey included 4 main sections, with each exploring effectiveness of interventions and barriers to success:

- **Education & Prevention:** Effective upstream prevention and education strategies as well as barriers to reporting illegal dumping.
- **Eradication & Waste Removal:** Effective removal strategies and barriers to eradication of illegal dumping hotspots.
- **Enforcement Strategies:** Effective enforcement strategies and barriers to enforcing anti-illegal dumping laws.

The survey instrument was developed in Microsoft Forms and prepared in both English and Spanish. To ensure inclusivity and comprehension, the Spanish version underwent cognitive interviews with non-native English speakers. The full survey is available in Appendix IV.

III.A.iii Respondent Profile

Survey respondents were drawn from professionals actively engaged in illegal dumping mitigation across California. Two primary pools of participants were prioritized:

1. **Members of Supervisor Miley's Statewide Illegal Dumping Task Force**
2. **Attendees of the Statewide Conference on Illegal Dumping**

Respondents identified their primary strategic pillar (education, eradication, or enforcement) and years of professional experience. For analysis, participants were grouped into two cohorts: those with 10 or more years of experience and those with fewer than 10 years. This allowed for comparative insights into how professional tenure shapes perceptions of illegal dumping.

The survey was distributed to over 1,000 professionals statewide, through professional networks like the Illegal Dumping Technical Advisory Committee (IDTAC), and to all registered participants of the Statewide Conference on Illegal Dumping, and through the ACID Task Force, and remained open for four weeks. It ultimately yielded 375 valid responses, representing a broad cross-section of disciplines and organizational types.

III.A.iv Mixed-Methods Contribution

The integration of qualitative interviews and a broad quantitative survey produced a robust dataset. Interviews provided depth and contextual understanding, while the survey offered breadth and generalizability. Together, these methods ground the report's findings and recommendations in both expertise and real-world practice, enhancing their credibility and applicability.

III.B Analyzing Agreement and Divergence

After collecting and cleaning the dataset in Microsoft Excel, we focused on identifying patterns of agreement and divergence among the survey respondents. We began by discovering areas of consensus— where experts from a wide range of backgrounds, including waste management, public health, law enforcement, and community advocacy, expressed aligned views. Across nearly all professional sectors, there was **broad agreement that illegal dumping is a systemic issue** exacerbated by insufficient enforcement, lack of public education, and inadequate access to bulky item disposal services. These areas of consensus serve as the guideposts for policymakers, indicating where unified support exists for immediate and long-term interventions.

Equally important to our analysis was the identification of divergent perspectives. Using demographic variables such as years of professional experience, role in addressing illegal dumping (Education, Eradication, Enforcement), and community type (urban, suburban, rural). We explored whether certain groups held statistically significant differing views.

One example of what this analysis uncovered was that experts working in rural and suburban areas were more likely to emphasize the challenges of limited enforcement presence, while urban respondents frequently highlighted issues related to tenant displacement and transient populations. Another example was that less experienced respondents expressed stronger support for technology-based solutions like surveillance and mobile reporting apps, while more experienced professionals were more skeptical of their effectiveness.

Perhaps the most impactful difference came when the IDSS team examined response differences based on Experience Level.

III.C Cross-Tabbing by Experience Level

To examine how professional background influences perspectives on illegal dumping, we conducted cross-tabulation analysis across key demographic categories, including area of expertise, professional role, geographic work setting, and years of experience. This method allowed us to identify patterns and variations between groups that might have been overlooked in aggregate results, providing a more nuanced understanding of respondents' perspectives.

The analysis was performed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, v. 26), with cross-tabulation tables displaying response distributions across subgroups. A chi-square test was then applied to determine whether observed differences were statistically significant, meaning the variation was unlikely due to chance. To facilitate this analysis, some categories were consolidated—for instance, years of experience were grouped into "less than 10 years" and "10 or more years"—ensuring sufficient sample sizes for valid comparisons and clearer interpretation.

Cross-tabbing by experience level revealed meaningful differences in how respondents approached solutions to illegal dumping. Those with less than 10 years of experience were more supportive of technology-driven interventions, such as mobile reporting apps and surveillance cameras, while respondents with a decade or more of experience expressed more caution, citing practical and long-term concerns. These findings highlight that professional experience shapes both perceptions of the problem and preferred strategies. Cross-tabbed results are used throughout the Results and Discussion sections above, to inform the report's Recommendations.

Notably, there are limitations to this type of analysis. Splitting the participants into two groups, based on experience, resulted in enough participants in each group to run analysis. However, when splitting across 3, such as by Role and Community, the population in each group was not enough. While many of these crosstabs point towards potential dynamics, such as those in the Enforcement role taking a less systemic approach to illegal dumping. The IDSS Teams suggests that these areas, where more data is needed to verify the significance, could be the focus of future efforts to more deeply understand the nuances of illegal dumping.

IV FULL SURVEY INSTRUMENT

Illegal Dumping Solutions Survey

This survey is designed for professionals, advocates, and experts with direct experience or deep understanding of illegal dumping to help identify key barriers, evaluate current strategies, and uncover opportunities. We aim to highlight gaps in policy and practice, elevate community-driven insights, and support the development of targeted, actionable solutions that promote cleaner, safer, and more resilient neighborhoods.

All answers are confidential.

* Required

About You

Tell us a little bit about yourself and your work.

1. What is **your primary role** in addressing illegal dumping? *(Select all that apply)* *

- [ ] Elected Official
- [ ] Public Sector (State)
- [ ] Public Sector (County)
- [ ] Public Sector (City)
- [ ] Private Sector
- [ ] Non-Profit / Advocacy
- [ ] Individual
- [ ] Other

2. **How long have you been involved** in addressing the illegal dumping issue? *

- ◯ Less than 5 years
- ◯ 5 - 10 years
- ◯ 10 - 20 years
- ◯ More than 20 years

3. What **type of community** do you generally work in? *(Select all that apply)* *

- [ ] Rural
- [ ] Suburban
- [ ] Urban
- [ ] N/A

4. Which of the following **roles** do you generally operate in? *

Select all that apply.

- [ ] Education & Prevention
- [ ] Eradication & Waste Removal
- [ ] Enforcement
- [ ] Other

Education & Prevention

6. Please rate the **effectiveness of the Education and Prevention strategies**? *

*Rank each of the following strategies from **not effective at all** to **most effective.***

	Not effective at all	Least effective	Neutral	Somewhat effective	Most Effective
School-based education and youth engagement	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Media campaigns (radio, TV, social media)	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Door-to-door outreach programs	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Business and landlord engagement initiatives	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Incentive programs for proper waste disposal	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Beautification and **Infrastructure Improvement**	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

7. Are there **other Education and Prevention strategies** that were not included above, which you believe are effective?

8. Please rank the following **Barriers to Reporting Illegal Dumping**? *

*Rank the following barriers from **Low** to **High.***

	Low Barrier	Medium Barrier	High Barrier
Fear of Retaliation - especially if the dumper is a neighbor or known individual.	◯	◯	◯
Inconvenience - find that reporting processes are too complicated and/or time consuming.	◯	◯	◯
Apathy - that reporting won't make a difference or isn't their responsibility.	◯	◯	◯
Lack of Awareness - not knowing it's illegal or how to report it.	◯	◯	◯
Not knowing how to report illegal dumping, or that illegal dumping can and should be reported.	◯	◯	◯
Distrust of Authority - believing that reporting won't lead to action.	◯	◯	◯

9. Are there **additional barriers preventing residents from reporting illegal dumping** that were not mentioned above?

Eradication & Waste Removal

11. Please rank the effectiveness of the following **strategies for cleaning up illegal dump sites**. *

*Rank each from **not effective at all** to **most effective**.*

	Not effective at all	Less effective	Neutral	Somewhat effective	Most effective
Reporting and Rapid Response System - Residents report dump sites, then municipal crews clean it up.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Municipal Cleanup Crews - local government is responsible for removal.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Adopt-a-Spot Programs - Residents and group maintain specific spaces.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Public-Private Partnerships - Municipalities partnering with local businesses to remove dumping quickly.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Restoration Projects - Combining cleanup and long-term beautification efforts (tree planting, etc).	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

12. Are there **other strategies to cleanup illegal dump sites** that are not mentioned above, which you believe are effective?

13. Please rank the following **barriers to eradicating illegal dump sites** quickly. *

Rank the following barriers from **Low** to **High**.

	Low Barrier	Medium Barrier	High Barrier
Lack of Funding - Insufficient resources for cleanup operations.	◯	◯	◯
Limited Manpower - Not enough staff or volunteers to perform the cleanups.	◯	◯	◯
Access Issues - Sites are in remote or hard to reach areas, or are complicated due to other issues like homelessness	◯	◯	◯
Jurisdictions& Ownership Issues - Confusion over who is responsible for cleaning up the dump site.	◯	◯	◯
Hazardous Materials - Special removal required for certain types of waste.	◯	◯	◯
Legal or Bureaucratic Delays - Permits or red tape slow the removal process.	◯	◯	◯

14. What **other barriers to eradicating illegal dump sites** exist but were not mentioned above?

Enforcement Strategies

16. Please rank each of the **effectiveness of the following enforcement strategies**. *

Rank the following strategies from **Not Effective at All** to **Most Effective** based on their potential for identifying and holding illegal dumpers accountable and prevent new instances of illegal dumping.

	Not effective at all	Less effective	Neutral	Somewhat effective	Most effective
Fines & Penalties - Issues citations to those caught illegally dumping.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Surveillance Cameras - Installing cameras in known hotspots.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Increasing Patrols - Law enforcement or code enforcement patrol known hotspots.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Publicizing Convictions - Using billboards or other media to highlight convictions and deter others.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Reward Programs - Incentives for reporting illegal dumpers.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

17. Are there **other enforcement strategies** for catching and prosecuting illegal dumpers that were not mentioned above?

18. Please rank the following **barriers to enforcing illegal dumping laws**. *

Rank the following barriers from **Low** to **High**.

	Low Barrier	Medium Barrier	High Barrier
Lack of Evidence - Hard to catch dumpers in the act or prove it who did it.	○	○	○
Weak Penalties - Fines may be too low to deter dumpers, and may not be worth pursuing.	○	○	○
Slow Legal Process - Investigation and prosecution takes too long.	○	○	○
Resource Constrains - Insufficient funding and personnel to prosecute illegal dumpers.	○	○	○
Outdated Laws - Existing regulations do not address current illegal dumping practices.	○	○	○
Competing priorities - Other crimes and issues are considered higher priority.	○	○	○

19. Are there any **additional challenges and barriers** that were not listed above?

Root Causes & Hidden Factors

If the answer is yes, you will be directed to Root Causes & Hidden Factors section

20. Would you like to answer questions about **Root Causes & Hidden Factors?** *

- ◯ Yes
- ◯ No

Root Causes & Hidden Factors

21. What is the **main reason** people dump illegally? *(Rank the following)* *

- **Lack of Enforcement** - Belief that there will be no negative personal consequences for dumping.
- **Moving or Eviction** - People dump when they are in a hurry to leave.
- **Lack of Awareness** - People don't know what's legal or where to take waste.
- **Avoiding Disposal Fees** - Legal dumping costs too much.
- **Cultural Norm** - "Others in the area do it too."
- **Inconvenient Disposal Options** - Landfills or drop-off sites are too far away or have inconvenient hours.
- **Illegal Businesses** - Contractors or haulers cut costs by dumping.

22. Are there any **other reasons** people dump illegally that we may have missed?

23. Please rank the following **barriers to innovation** in regards to illegal dumping.

Rank the following barriers from **Low** to **High**.

	Low Barrier	Medium Barrier	High Barrier
Lack of Funding & Resources - lack the financial resources to invest in advanced waste management.	◯	◯	◯
Regulatory & Bureaucratic Hurdles - Conflicting policies between local, state, and federal agencies may create obstacles.	◯	◯	◯
Resistance to Change - the resist to adopting new methods due to perceived risks or added complexity.	◯	◯	◯
Illegal Dumping as a Systemic Issue - Root causes are often overlooked in favor of short-term fixes.	◯	◯	◯
Public Apathy & Lack of Awareness - Communities don't see illegal dumping as a critical issue, reducing support for new initiatives.	◯	◯	◯
Technological Limitations - High-tech solutions, like facial recognition for dumpers, face privacy concerns or technical failures.	◯	◯	◯

Reflections and Recommendations

24. If you could **change one thing about how illegal dumping is handled**, what would it be?

25. What types of **interventions have failed** in the past, and **what lessons were learned**?

26. Are there any specific **pieces of legislation** you think would be **helpful to the solution** of illegal dumping?

27. Is there anything else you'd like to **share about your experience**, challenges, or insights related to illegal dumping solutions?

V QUALITATIVE INTERVIEWS

Interview responses are listed in alphabetical order by last name. Each section below contains the name and title of the interview subject, a list of questions they were asked, and notes from their conversation. Interviews were used to help guide and design the IDSS, and to interpret the results.

V.A ERIN ARMSTRONG, DIRECTOR OF POLICY & STRATEGIC INITIATIVES, ALAMEDA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, DISTRICT 4

Description: Erin Armstrong is the Director of Policy & Strategic Initiatives for Alameda County Supervisor Nate Miley, where she has led the Illegal Dumping Task Force since 2018. Through her work addressing illegal dumping, she authored the Alameda County Illegal Dumping (ACID) Report. Erin has convened the Statewide Conference on Illegal Dumping (IDCon) since 2021. She holds a Joint Masters in Public Policy & Business Administration from Mills College in Oakland.

Focus: Trends, data, and innovative solutions.

- Are there new or emerging trends in illegal dumping that current strategies aren't equipped to handle?
- What innovative solutions or technologies have you seen in other regions that could be adapted to address illegal dumping here?
- Based on available data, what anomalies or outliers in illegal dumping trends don't fit the expected patterns, and what might be causing them?
- What data do you wish you had that would provide the most actionable insights into illegal dumping behavior and prevention?
- What is in the mind of the dumper? Why do illegal dumping?

Notes: Erin emphasized that illegal dumping in Alameda County has grown beyond the capacity of local governments to manage effectively, describing the issue as both systemic and fragmented. She noted that while affluent jurisdictions can invest more in enforcement, this approach simply moves the dumping into less-resourced neighborhoods instead of addressing the root causes. Limited budgets and siloed agency efforts have hindered coordination and long-term progress. She described current efforts as largely reactive, focused on cleanup rather than prevention, and stressed that data collection must evolve beyond reporting to drive lasting policy reform and close enforcement gaps.

V.B JAMES GORDON, INSPECTOR, ALAMEDA COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY'S OFFICE

Description: James Gordon is an inspector with the Environmental Justice unit of the Alameda County District Attorney's Office. He has over 30 years of experience addressing illegal dumping from an enforcement role, including time with Oakland Police Department and the DA.

Focus: Enforcement challenges, trends, and solutions.

Questions:

1. What are the biggest challenges your team faces when enforcing illegal dumping laws, and how do you prioritize cases with limited resources?
2. Have you noticed any trends in illegal dumping such as materials or timing that could help shape future enforcement strategies?
3. How does community reporting impact your efforts, and what barriers prevent residents from reporting illegal dumping?
4. What changes or resources would most improve your team's ability to enforce illegal dumping laws effectively?
5. What are the biggest gaps in current illegal dumping laws that make enforcement difficult, and how do offenders exploit these gaps?
6. Are there patterns in repeat offenders that could inform a more proactive enforcement strategy, and what would an ideal deterrence model look like?

Notes: James described enforcement as a resource-constrained, evidence-driven battle. His team partners with OPD and the Sheriff's Office for surveillance and arrests and has used cameras to document dumpers. The core problem surrounding enforcement is lack of evidence. Camera documentation and license plate views often lack witness testimony or facial ID, so cases default to citations rather than DA charges. He recommended a layered deterrence model: scale fines by volume, require on-site cleanup hours, and use expedited traffic-court processing to speed enforcement outcomes. He also advocated that tickets still send a cultural message, but long-term success depends on changing the norms (the "Broken Windows" angle).

V.C Doug Kobold, Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council

Description: Doug Kobold is the Executive Director of the California Product Stewardship Council, a nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing product stewardship and extending producer responsibility programs across the state. He works with local governments, industry leaders, and communities to reduce waste, promote recycling, and implement sustainable product policies.

Focus: Community impact and potential solutions.

Questions:

- How does the perception of enforcement effectiveness impact illegal dumping behavior, and could visible enforcement efforts alone deter dumping?
- What community-led solutions have failed in the past, and what lessons were learned that could shape future approaches?
- How can the community sustain anti-dumping efforts once external support (e.g., pilot programs) ends?
- What role do local organizations play in preventing illegal dumping, and how can they be incentivized to contribute to long-term waste stewardship?

Notes: Doug emphasized community frustration—perceived "under-enforcement" and judicial leniency have eroded deterrence. He highlighted that visible enforcement alone is not enough, residents need affordable & accessible disposal, and durable prevention measures (immovable barriers like boulders to deter truck access). Doug called out the failures of short-term grants and cleanup days; when the County cleans up, the dumping simply resumes which creates a dependency and no long-term behavior change. He supported reward driven reporting programs but also noted that previous pilots never materialized. Ultimately, Doug was in support of stronger enforcement tools such as impounding vehicles & stiffer penalties, product stewardship strategies, and elected official convening to sustain momentum. The gist is, he wants to protect quality of life and make dumping socially unacceptable.

V.D EDWARD LABAYOG, ASSISTANT DEPUTY DIRECTOR AT THE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

Description: Edward Labayog is the Assistant Deputy Director at the Alameda County Community Development Agency, where he oversees programs that promote sustainable community growth, housing development, and environmental compliance. He has extensive experience in program administration, land-use planning, and interagency collaboration to support equitable development.

Focus: Code enforcement challenges and collaboration.

Questions:

- What are the biggest challenges your department faces in enforcing codes related to illegal dumping, and how do you prioritize efforts with limited resources?
- How does your department collaborate with other agencies (e.g., Public Works, law enforcement) to track and address illegal dumping? What are the barriers? What are the gaps?
- Are there enforcement strategies from other types of code violations that could be adapted to tackle illegal dumping more effectively?
- What are the most overlooked or underestimated consequences of illegal dumping that are not currently factored into code enforcement priorities?

Notes: Edward described enforcement realities as a struggle – the code team often must rely on Public Works for public rights of way dumping and call the Sheriff when dumping is not clearly a property owner issue. Because prosecutions are difficult, enforcement tends to shift the burden onto private property owners, even when they are victims. He highlighted gaps & remedies used elsewhere, such as voucher systems, free dump certificates and microgrants to finance cameras and signage. He stated that the County lacks resources to help private owners and that an unused abatement tool could be revisited. His priorities, if given a $5m budget, would be vouchers/free dumps for victims, cost-reduction for private owners, and microgrants to deter future dumping. He stressed that siloed agency lanes and lack of confidence in DA/Sheriff follow-through are major barriers to effective joint enforcement.

V.E JOHN MEDLOCK JR. DEPUTY DIRECTOR OF ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC WORKS

Description: John Medlock Jr. is the Deputy Director of the Alameda County Public Works Agency, where he manages critical infrastructure, road maintenance, and environmental services for the County. With extensive leadership experience in public works operations, he plays a key role in coordinating illegal dumping prevention, community engagement, and interdepartmental initiatives to maintain safe and sustainable neighborhoods.

Focus: Operational Impact & Mitigation Efforts.

Questions:

- If illegal dumping were suddenly cut in half, what unexpected operational challenges might arise in how waste is managed or services or allocated?
- Are there specific areas or types of dumping that consume a disproportionate amount of resources, and how could these be addressed more efficiently?
- What long-term infrastructure changes (e.g., waste disposal sites, lighting, surveillance) would have the greatest impact on reducing illegal dumping?

Notes: John framed illegal dumping as a behavior problem that creates heavy, recurring operational costs—he estimated annual cleanup costs in the $5-10M range. He noted that some types of waste such as hazardous materials and large-scale debris disproportionately drain resources, and that eradication alone does not solve the recurrence. He also advocated for "strong-arm" enforcement that imposes stricter penalties such as vehicle impounding and loss of driving privileges for illegal dumpers. He also spoke about changing the culture norm and restoring a sense of pride within the communities. He highlighted existing funding sources, CRV funds, that could be used for free removals or voucher programs. He warned that cleanup demands strain crews and that any successful strategy must maintain consistent service levels while also reducing long term demand through prevention and enforcement.