

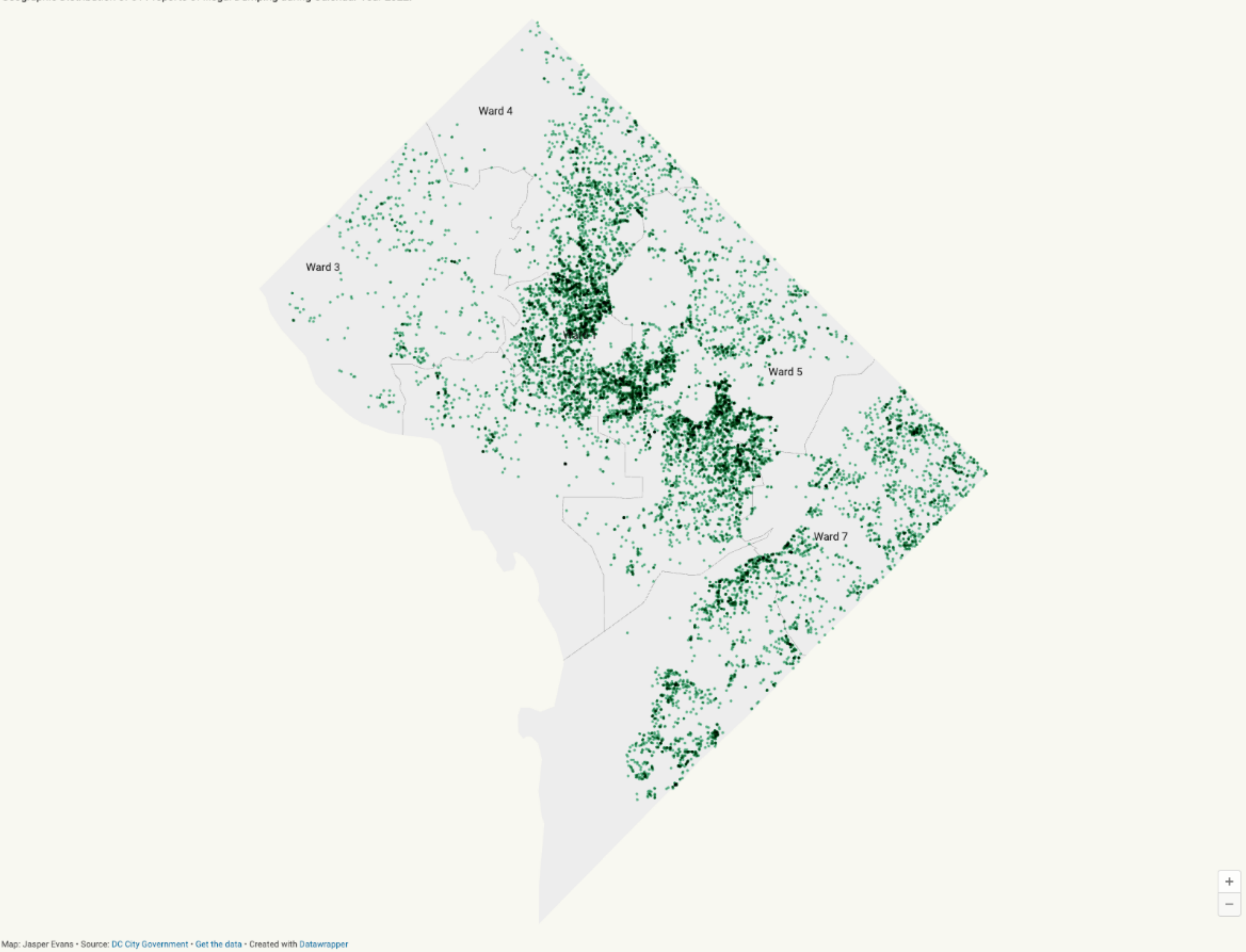
DC'S BATTLE WITH ILLEGAL DUMPING

A VISIBLE AND STEADY IMPACT

Has Washington DC become a city plagued with endemic illegal dumping? According to data published by the Washington DC City Government, during 2022, there were nearly 14,000 reported instances of illegal dumping submitted to the City's 311, a service used to organize and respond to non-emergency incidents requiring municipal service assistance. While this number looms, some DC Wards saw far less illegal dumping compared to others.

311 Reports of Illegal Dumping in 2022

Geographic Distribution of 311 reports of Illegal Dumping during Calendar Year 2022.



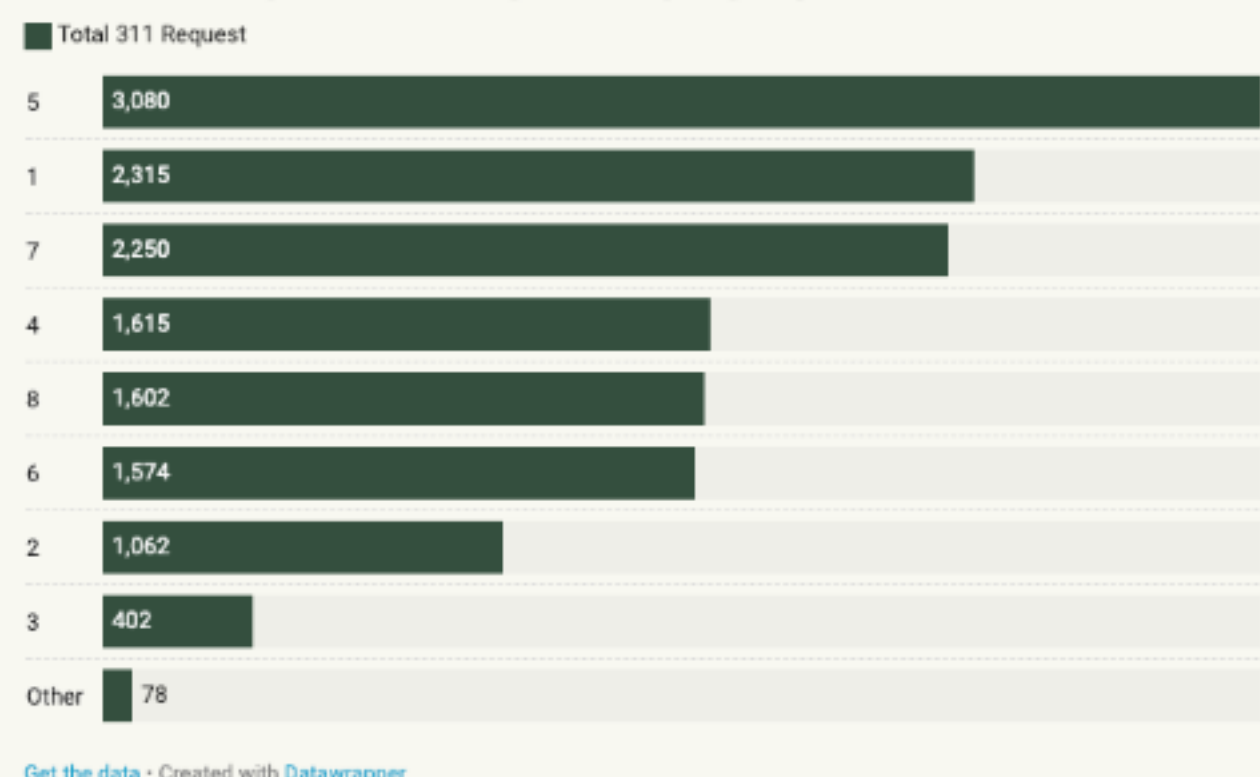
COMMUNITIES AT RISK

According to the US Office of Disease prevention and Health Promotion, exposure to environmental pollutants have the potential to spur respiratory diseases, heart disease, and some forms of cancer. This agency notes, individuals with low incomes are more likely to live in areas suffering from environmental pollution and are more likely to feel health effects from increased exposure to pollutants.

311 report data compiled by the DC city government revealed, during 2022, the top 3 DC city Wards with the highest reports of illegal dumping were Ward 7 (2,250) reports, Ward 1 (2,315) reports, and Ward 5 (3,080) reports. Ward 3 was attributed to, by far, the least number of reports of illegal dumping at 402 reports during the year 2022. Ward 2 totaled the next lowest total of reports at 1062.

Thousands of reports separate the top 3 Wards from the highest number of illegal dumping reports in Ward 3, the Ward with the least number of illegal dumping 311 reports in 2022.

Total 311 Reports for Illegal Dumping, By DC Ward in 2022



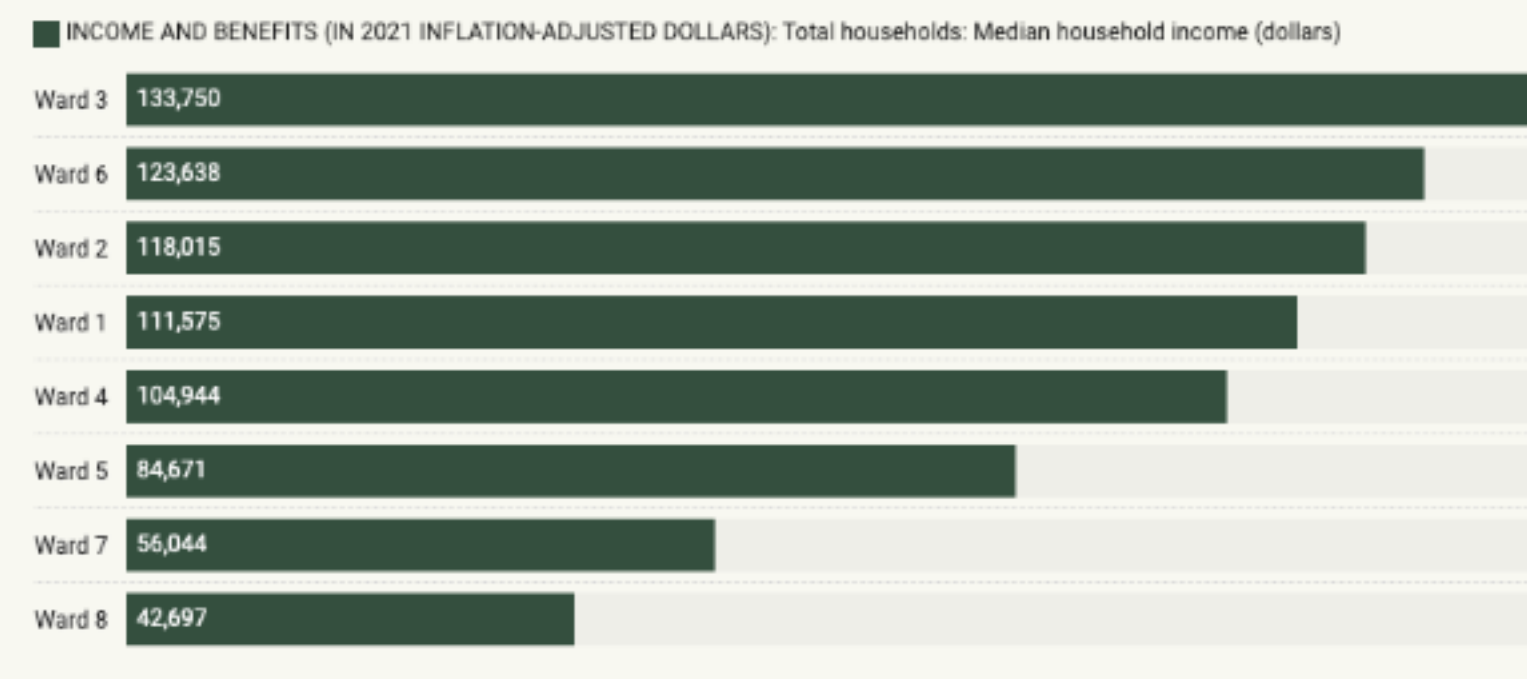
A vacant lot in Ward 4, Washington DC, filled with discarded bags of waste.
Photography by Jasper Evans



Decaying garbage exposed to the environment.
Photo courtesy of Pexels

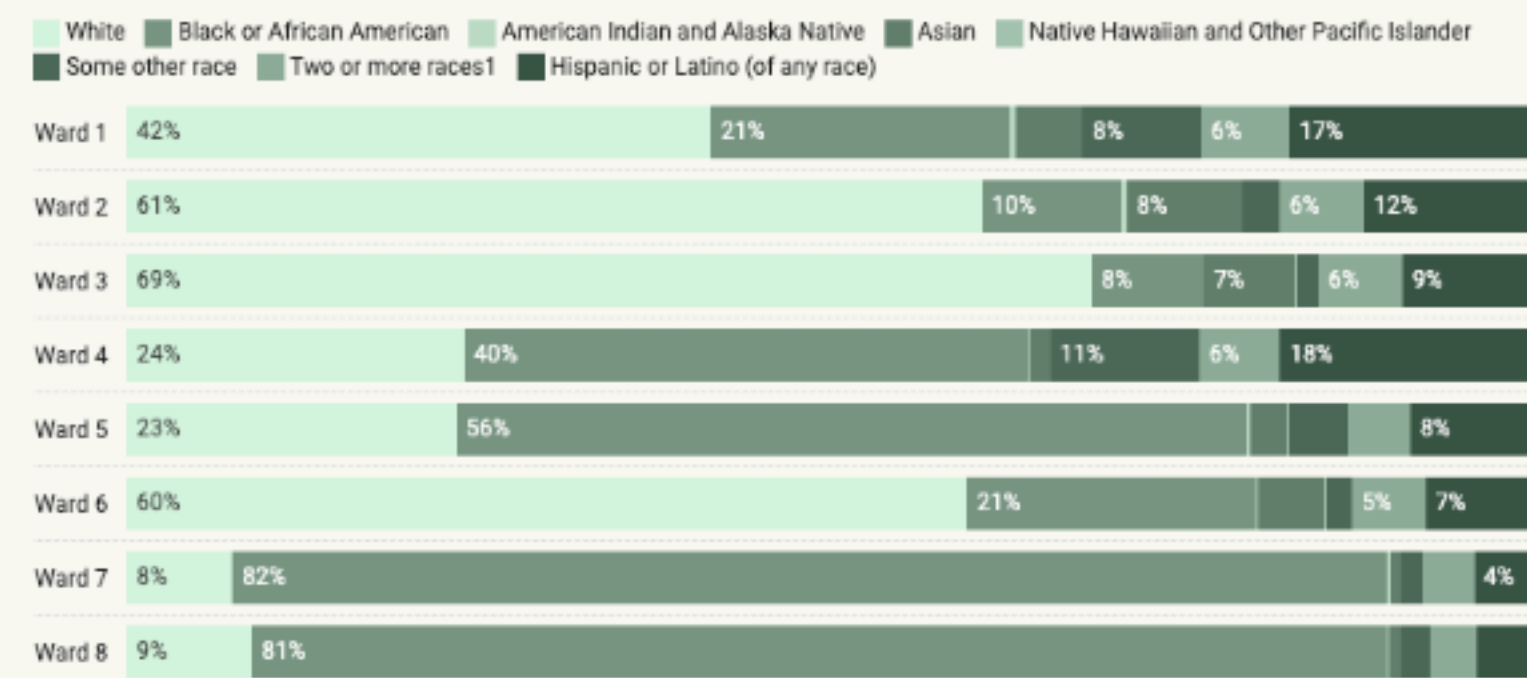
IMPACTED WARDS, AT A GLANCE

Median Household Income, by DC Ward: 2022 ACS Totals



Ward 1 ranked second among all dc Wards in reported cases of illegal dumping to the 311 service. DC's Ward 1 has the second lowest total population, ahead of Ward 6. Ward 1's median household income according to the US census bureau is approximately \$111,575, nearly \$27,000 more than the median household income of Ward 5, the DC Ward with the highest number of illegal dumping 311 reports in 2022. In contrast to Ward 3, Ward 1 is among Washington DC's most ethnically diverse Wards according to Census ACS data, with more than 50 percent of residents reporting being of non-white background, and approximately 42% of residents reporting to be of white background. Mapping the coordinates of 311 reports of illegal dumping, the physical concentration of reported dumping incidents appeared to be the highest in ward 1, the highest of all Wards noted in this article. This concentration of reports in Ward 1 appears to be amplified mainly due to Ward 1 being the, geographically, smallest Ward in the city.

Demographic Characteristics of DC Wards



PUBLIC HEALTH IMPLICATIONS AND LASTING DAMAGE

311 reports may not tell the whole story of the environmental strife Wards 7 and 5 have faced; however, 311 reports should be leveraged as an indicator of an issue that deserves a resolution. Individuals of low income are more likely to live in areas which face increased environmental pollution that may aggravate underlying health conditions and may have long-term health implications. Long term illness amongst a population already living under the city's median income has the potential to deepen systemic inequities and income disparities in Washington DC. 311 reports only scratch the surface of what other cases of environmental pollution may be affecting the communities of Wards 5 and 7. As most of DC's population resides in Wards 5 and 7, the DC city government should examine the observed issue and strive to address inequities affecting the public health of the residents of its most populous Wards.

Total Population of Each DC Ward

