A Public Health Approach to Preventing and Treating Child Abuse and Neglect

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NGA Human Services Policy Institute

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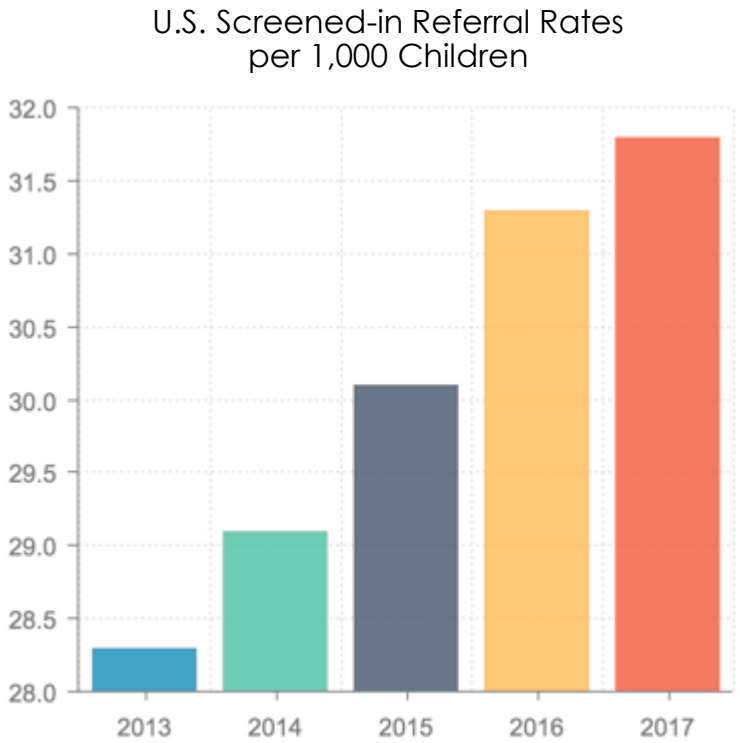
The rate of child maltreatment in the United States is increasing.



Source: U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Administration on Children, Youth and Families, Children's Bureau. (2019). Child Maltreatment 2017. Available from https://www.acf.hhs.gov/cb/research-data-technology/ statistics-research/child-maltreatment

Public Health Approach - CDC

Step 1 – Define and Monitor the Problem

Step 2 – Identify Risk and Protective Factors

Step 3 – Develop and Test Prevention Strategies

Step 4 – Assure Widespread Adoption

Defining Predictive Analytics

Predictive Analytics: "The practice of extracting information from data sets to determine patterns and predict outcomes and trends" (Predictive Analytics, Applications in Child Welfare, Casey Family Programs)

Predictive Risk Modeling: a specific type of predictive analytics, focused on using data patterns to identify predictors of risk and assign risk categories based on these patterns to individuals and/or families (Predictive Analytics, Applications in Child Welfare, Casey Family Programs)

Examples of Predictive Analytics

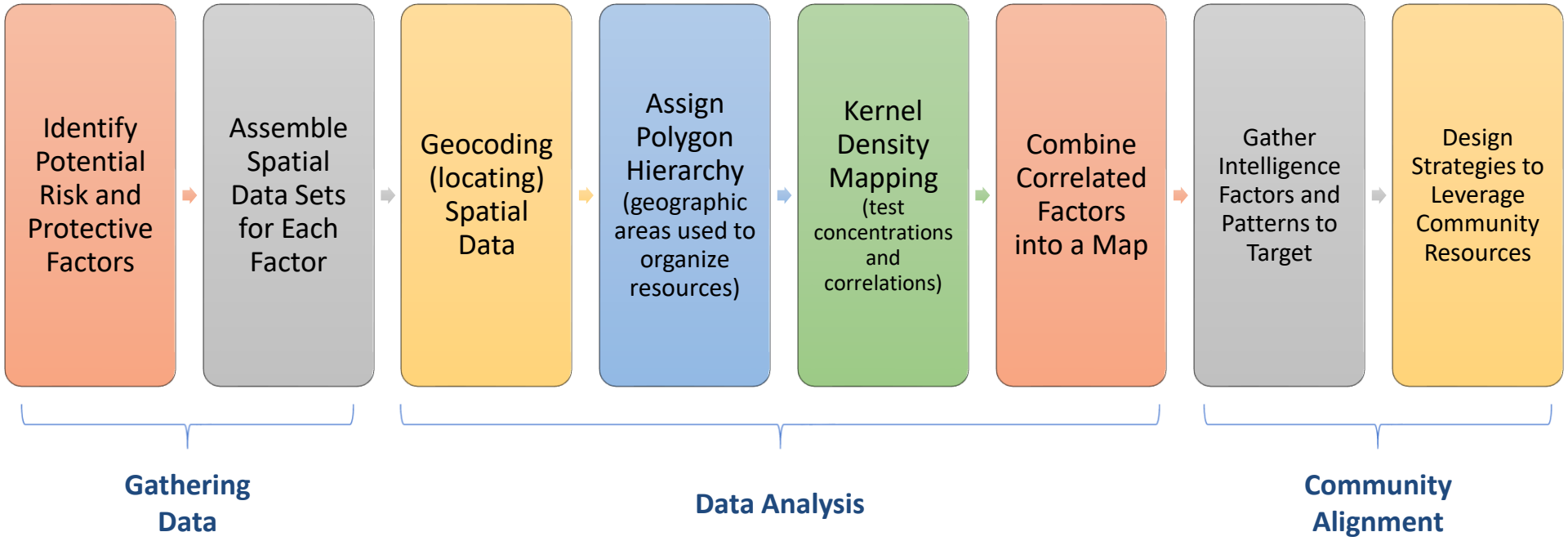
Amazon Product Recommendations

Healthcare Screenings

Facebook Ads

Fraud Detection

Predictive Analytics in Child Welfare



Geospatial Risk Modeling/Analysis

Protective Variables

- Social connections
- Parental supports
- Health
- Stable housing
- Employment
- More parental education
- Well resourced schools
- Places of worship
- Parks
- Community Centers
- Licensed child care
- Early learning centers
- Health clinics

Risk Factors

- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Physical and emotional neglect
- Exposure to:
    - Domestic Violence
    - Substance misuse within household
    - Household mental illness
    - Parental separation or divorce
    - Incarcerated household member

Geospatial Risk Modeling applied to Child Abuse

If violent behavior is purely a psychological characteristic of the individual, where someone lives should have no bearing on their likelihood of experiencing ACEs and child maltreatment,

We would expect it to occur randomly across geographical regions.

This is not what we see.

Geospatial Risk Modeling applied to Child Abuse

- Geospatial risk models are built on the notion that
  - Place matters and should be taken into account when estimating risk
  - Physical elements of the environment contribute to or reduce the likelihood of risk
- Information on these elements can be used to improve prediction – their frequency and distance from locations where child abuse occurs

Geospatial Risk Modeling applied to Child Abuse

- We are interested in identifying the socio-economic and physical elements that make a neighborhood risky for children
- If features that enable or contribute to the likelihood of ACEs and child maltreatment can be identified, it is likely they can also be mitigated

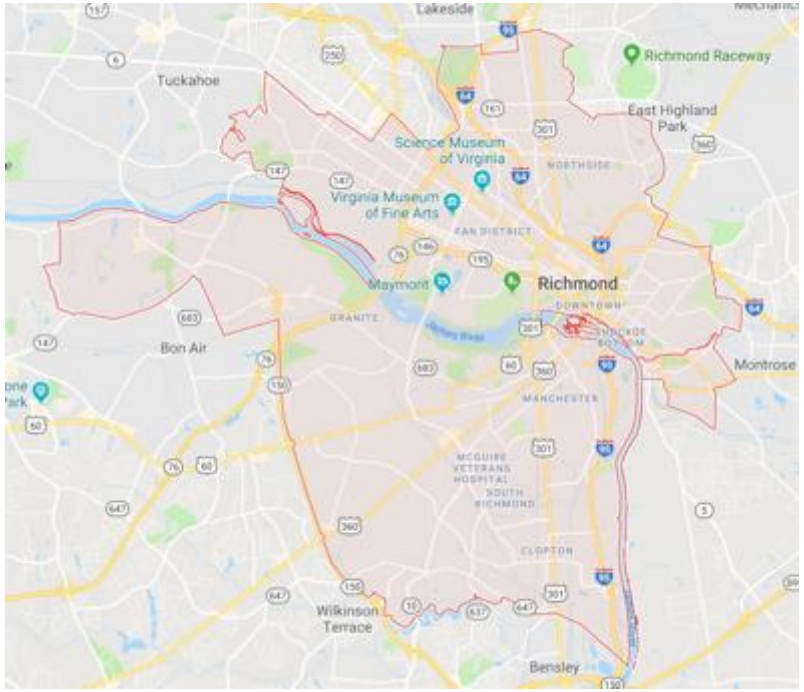
Study Area -- City of Richmond:

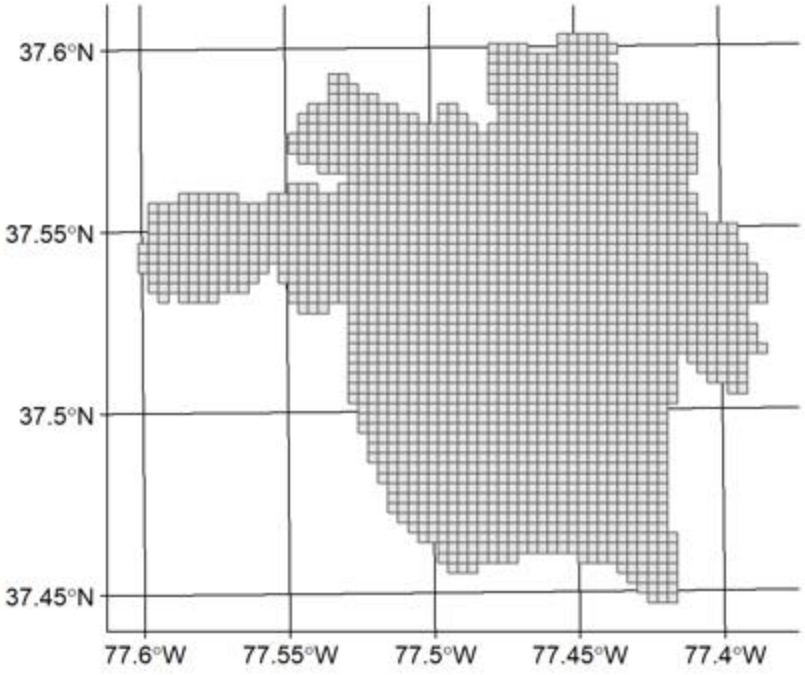
- 62.5 square miles
- Population: 227,032
- Children: 41,000
- Under age five: 13,850

- 48% African American
- 44.7% White
- 6.5% Latino

US Census 2010

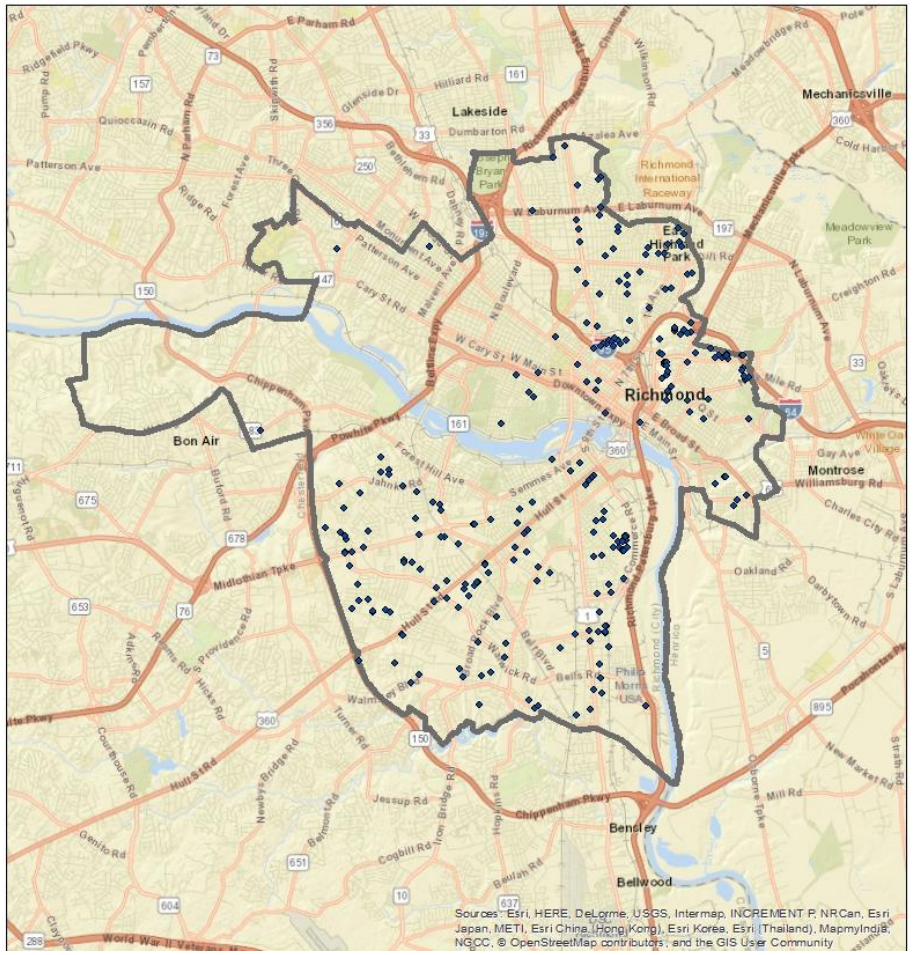
1,910 individual 1,000 ft^2 cells





Geocode Founded Child Maltreatment Cases

Richmond City
VDSS: Founded Referrals (SFY 2014 - 2017)
(n = 280)



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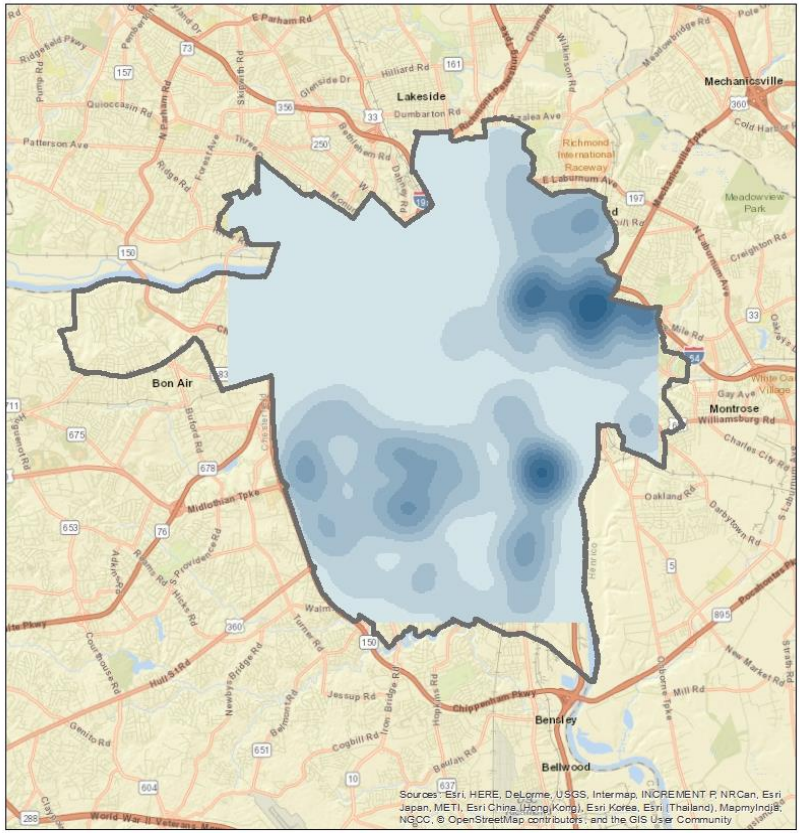
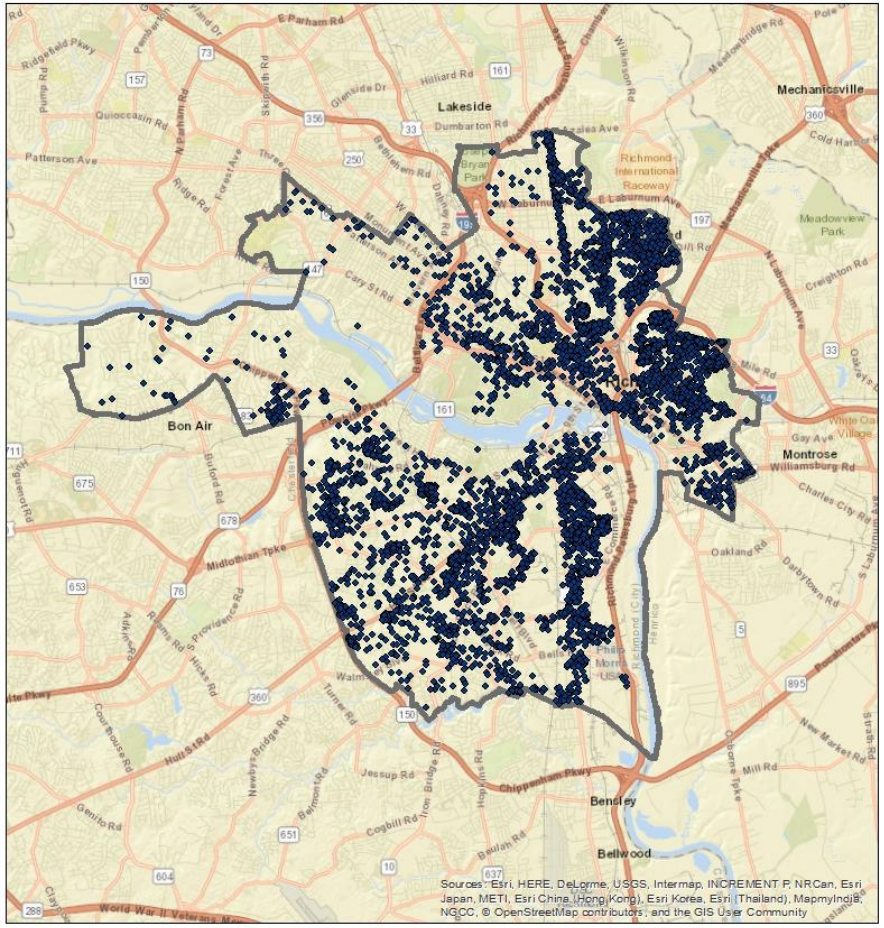


Intensity
Low High

Data Source: Virginia Department of Social Services
DOS: 7/1/2013 - 6/30/2017

Look For Clustering and Associated Risk or Protective Factors

Richmond City
Violent Crime* Data January 2014 - December 2016
(n = ~8,700)



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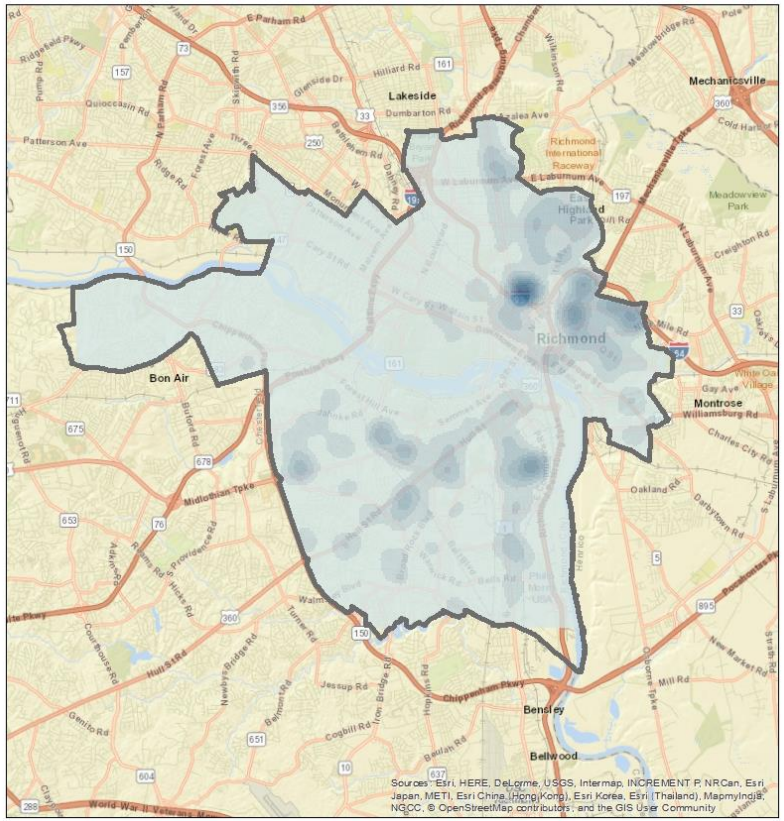
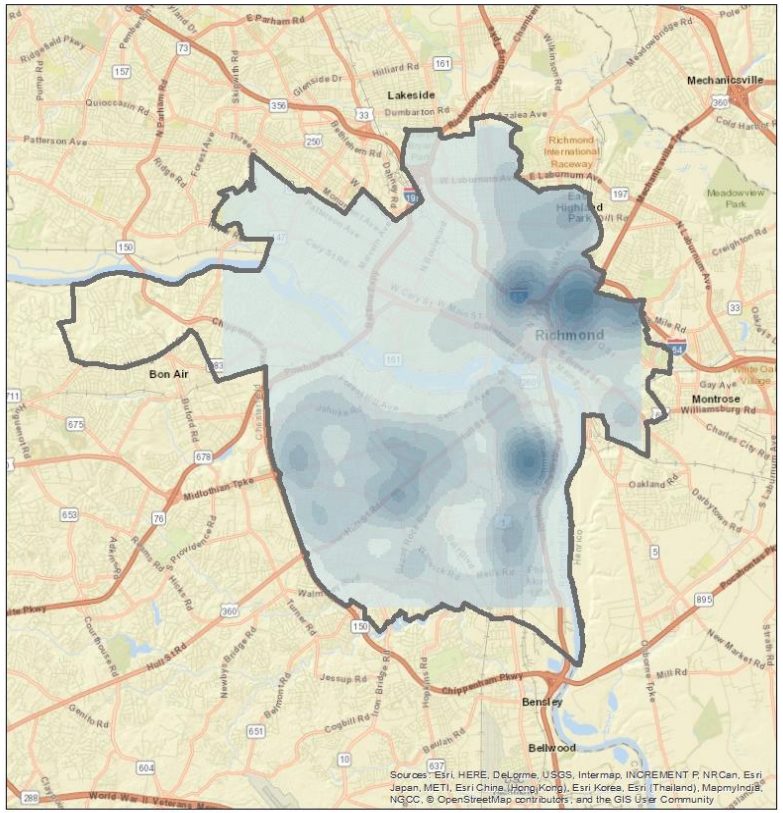


Intensity
Low High

Data Source: Richmond City Police (edited for Violent Crime*); DOS = 1/1/2014 - 12/31/2016
*Aggravated Assault, Aggravated Assault Domestic, Forcible Rape, Forcible Sodomy, Kidnapping/Abduction, Murder/Non-Negligent Manslaughter, Sexual Battery, Simple Assault, Simple Assault Domestic

Founded CPS Investigations, Crime and Domestic Violence in Richmond, VA

Richmond City
CPS Founded & Domestic Violence - Weighted Sum - Kernel Analysis - Equal Weight



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Richmond City
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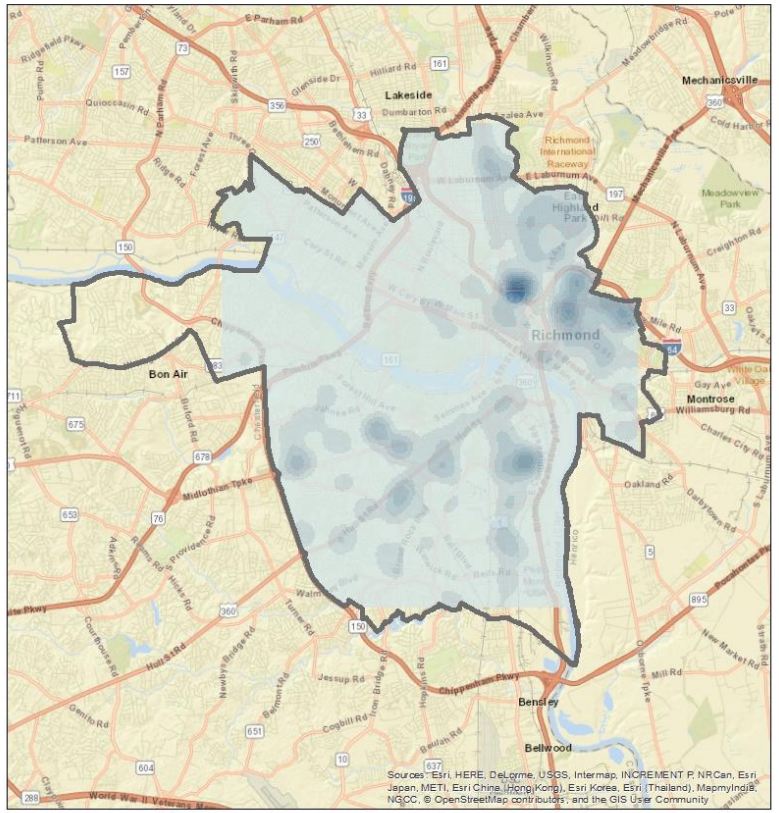

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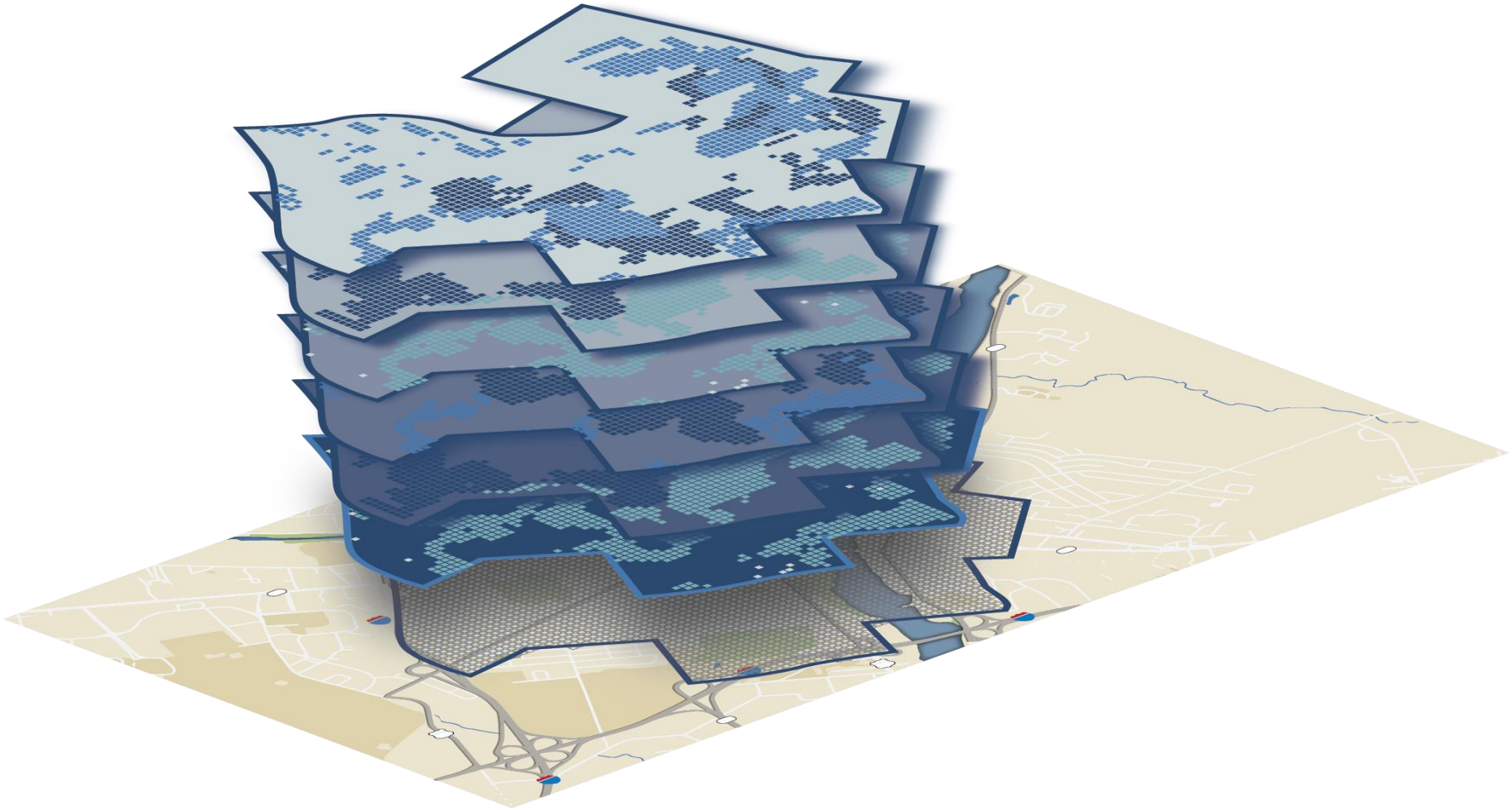
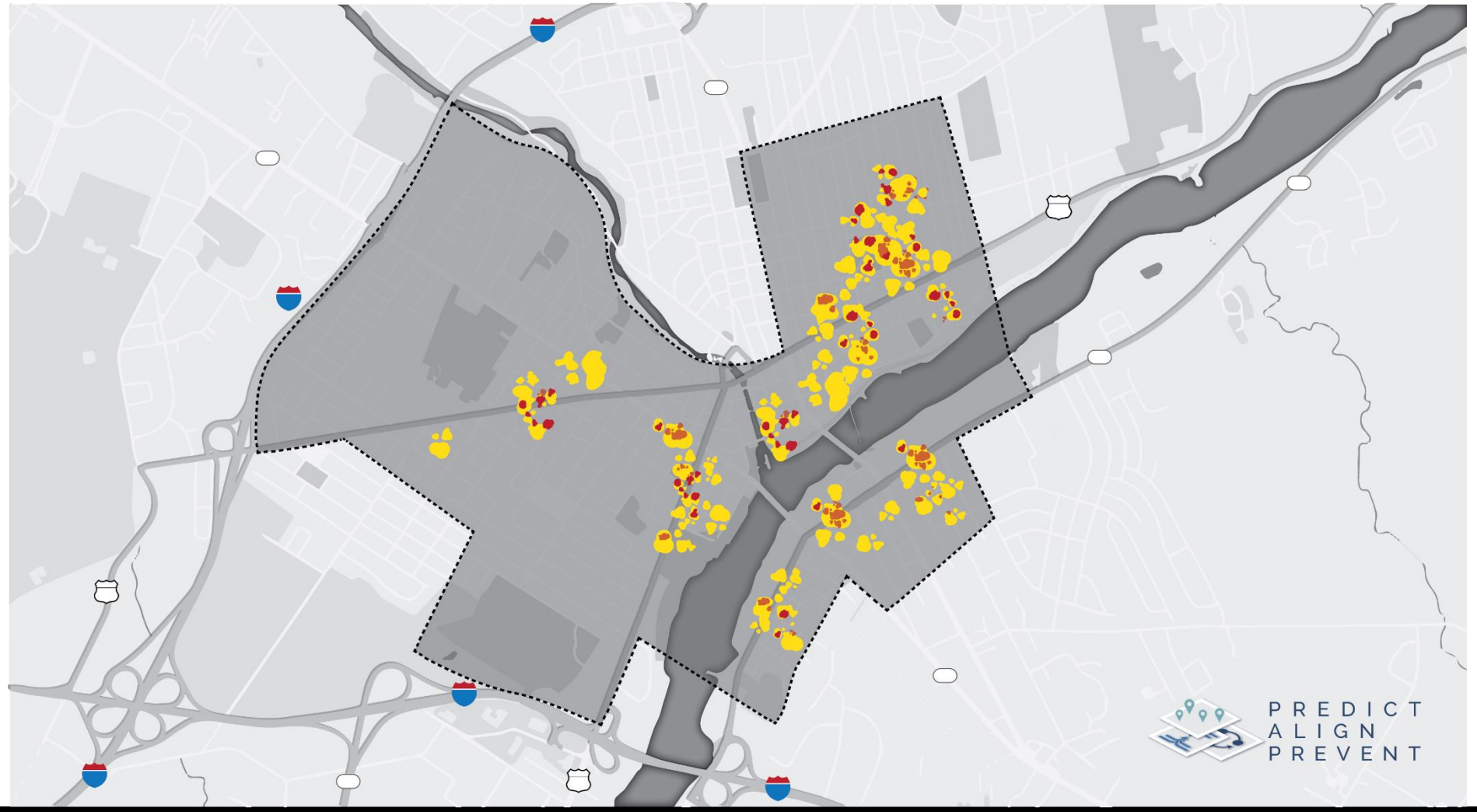
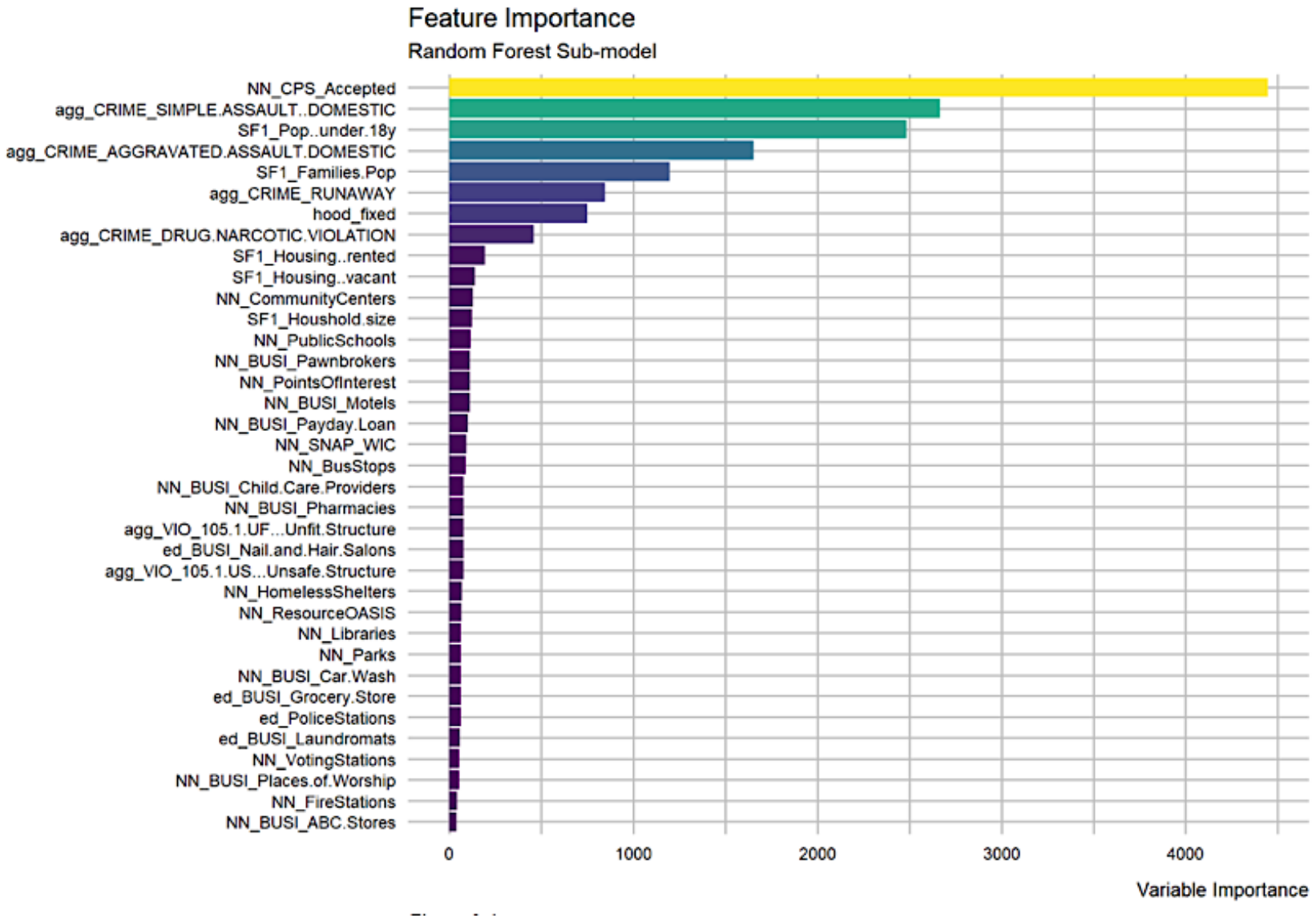
Map Risk and Protective Factor Layers



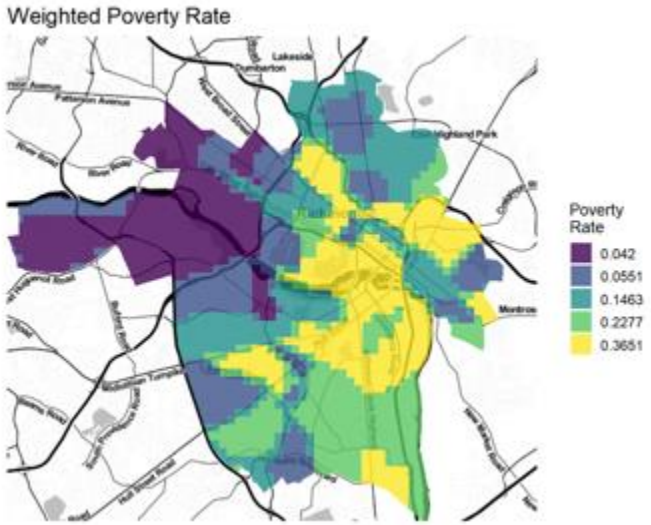
Predict High Risk Areas

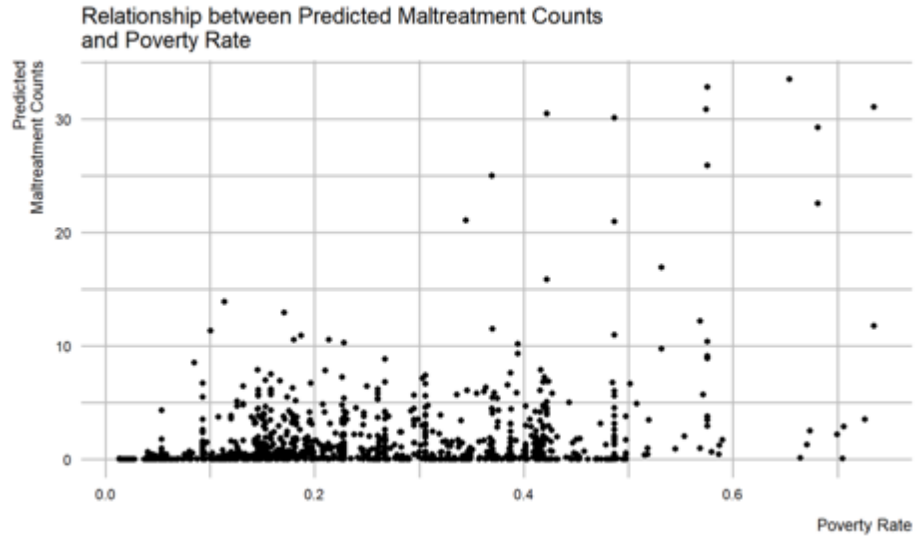


Feature Importance



How does the distribution of poverty relate to maltreatment events?





These tables illustrate the relationship between poverty rate and predicted maltreatment count. The scatter plot shows that the correlation between poverty and predictive risk is marginal. This visual relationship is confirmed by a correlation coefficient of 0.29. The weak relationship persists even when the zero count grid cells are removed.

Aligning Project Components

Community Engagement

- What is the type of abuse to be targeted by the intervention?
- For each risk factor identified in the model, what is its relationship to the type of abuse?
  - What mechanisms link the risk factor to the type of abuse?
- What actions can DSS, local police, VDH, and other community partners take to mitigate the spatial influence of each risk factor?
- Given available resources and our understanding of how the risk factors are related to the type of abuse, what risk factors should be prioritized to receive attention?

Community Engagement

- Could be based on order of relative risk
- Could be based on financial cost of intervention
- Could be based on feasibility of coordinating and deploying necessary resources
- Could be based on community willingness to implement the intervention