

## BACKGROUND

Childhood food insecurity increases significantly during the summer months.

- Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) provides free meals to children in low-income communities during the summer.
- Community Kitchen Pittsburgh (CKP) offers breakfast and/or lunch services to summer programs that specifically target children who qualify for free or reduced-price school meals.
- CKP's support lessens food insecurity while allowing summer programs to emphasize educational and recreational activities.



Figure 1. Picture from Environmental Charter Schools' Cafeteria

## OBJECTIVES

Evaluate the impact of CKP's sponsorship on food insecurity, academic performance, physical activity, and overall well-being of children participating in summer programs throughout the greater Pittsburgh area.

## METHODS

- Gathered data on food-insecure children in Pittsburgh to highlight the need for this program
- Collected data on food-insecure children in Pittsburgh vs. national averages
- Analyzed free and reduced lunch participation rates
- Reviewed research on nutrition programs and summer learning programs to gain an understanding of their impacts.
- Analyzed studies on summer camps promoting healthy lifestyles and preventing educational regression.



Figure 2. Picture from Environmental Charter Schools' Cafeteria

# Food is the foundation to change lives and strengthen communities

## RESULTS

- **Geographic Reach:** CKP serves strategic high-need areas throughout Allegheny County
- **Academic Support:** CKP supports schools (like Environmental Charter Schools) help students maintain IEPs and provide year-round nutritional support
- **Community Benefits:** Excess food is donated to the broader community, extending impact beyond program participants
- **Family Economic Relief:** SFSP funding enables families that qualify for free and reduced lunch to afford summer camp programs, reducing household food insecurity while supporting children's academic and social development

Community Need Index for Allegheny County Census Tracts, 2014–2018

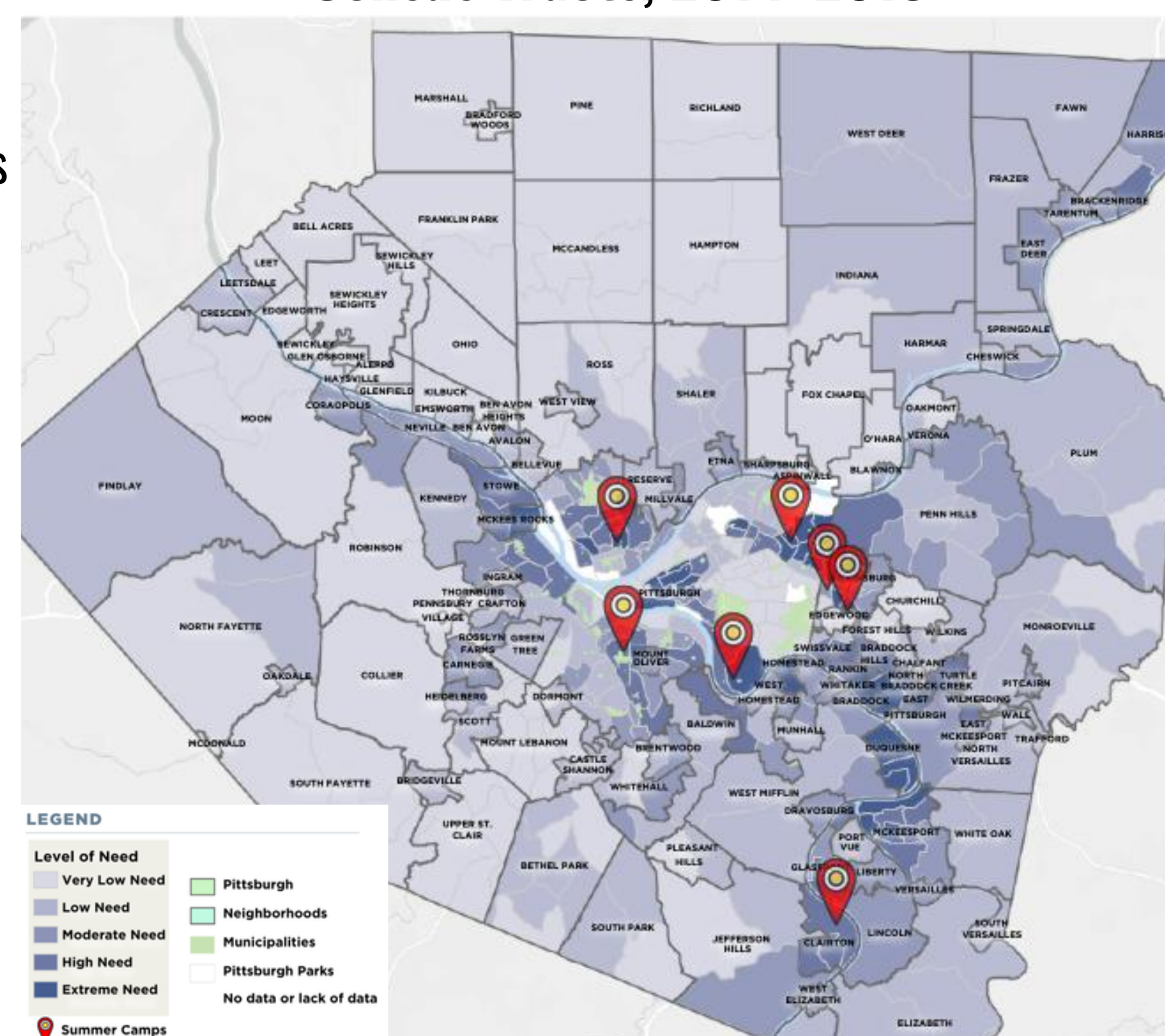


Figure 3. Community Need Index and CKP Summer Camp Locations

Child Food Insecurity in the United States and Allegheny County (2023 Data)

	United States	Allegheny County, Pennsylvania
Ineligible for Federal Nutrition Programs (above 185% poverty)	33%	43%
Food Insecurity Rate	19.20%	18.20%
Eligible for Federal Nutrition Programs (below 185% poverty)	67%	57%

Table 1. Child Food Insecurity Data From Feeding America

## DISCUSSION

This summer, CKP has given over 267 meals per day to seven separate sites.

- Sites have 50% or more of their participants who qualify for free and reduced lunch<sup>7</sup>
- SPSP promotes healthy eating, activity, and educational continuity by supporting summer camps.
  - Contributes substantially towards the daily goals for energy and nutrients<sup>9</sup>
- Much of the achievement gap originates over the summer period, when children are not in school.<sup>2</sup>
- The program addresses both immediate nutritional needs and long-term educational outcomes by allowing students to study without concern for where their next meal will come from
- **Supervisor from ECS,** "If the program [SFSP] was not available to supply food, we would have to charge students. This wouldn't allow them to get out of the house in the summer and continue their IEPs."

## IMPLICATIONS

H.R.1 has increased SNAP work requirements, reducing program eligibility

- Reduced SNAP and Medicaid access decreases free and reduced lunch qualification, directly impacting the summer meal program

## REFERENCES



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