Methodology

The social determinants of health (SDOH) methodology utilizes eight quantitative factors that were determined to be indicators of public health. This methodology has been updated from the 2019 Social Determinants of Health Data Report, available at wilmapco.org/data-reports. All necessary data is available at the block group level from the American Community Survey. These factors are described below.

Poverty rate – The percentage of households below the poverty line. A higher percentage indicates a larger negative impact on public health.

High school graduation rate – The percentage of individuals 25 years or older with a high school diploma or GED. A lower percentage indicates a larger negative impact on public health.

Black and Hispanic concentrations* – The percentage of the population that identifies as either Hispanic or non-Hispanic Black. A higher percentage indicates a larger negative impact on public health.

Employment rate - The percentage of the civilian work force that is employed. A lower percentage indicates a larger negative impact on public health.

Homeownership rate - The percentage of housing units that are owner-occupied. A lower percentage indicates a larger negative impact on public health.

Householder tenure - The median year in which householders moved in to owner-occupied households. A more recent median year indicates a larger negative impact on public health.

Single parent households – The percentage of family households (households with at least one child) with no more than one parent. A higher percentage indicates a larger negative impact on public health.

Food desert status - Block groups that are located within a food desert indicate a larger negative impact on public health. This methodology uses WILMAPCO's definition of a food desert, which are block groups with at least 20% of households below poverty and 33% of the population one mile or farther from the nearest supermarket.

Each block group receives a score for each factor. For all factors except for food desert status, the score is relative to the study area. Block groups in the top 20% for each factor receive 2 points; block groups in the top 50% (but not in the top 20%) receive 1 point. Block groups within food deserts receive 2 points. A block group's SDOH score is the sum total of its score for each of the eight factors. A higher SDOH score indicates greater potential public health concern.

The block groups in and surrounding downtown Newark were adjusted to receive a score of zero for both poverty rate and employment rate, because these factors are not likely to be a negative health indicator for college students.

*State-level data have shown Blacks and Hispanics to be at elevated risk of poor health outcomes. There are many root causes of these observed racial/ethnic health disparities. These include: structural racism, residential segregation, limited healthy and affordable food access, heightened crime exposure, limited preventative care access, limited walking and bicycling activity, and more.