Name: Unemployment

Short Description: Percent of labor force that is unemployed.

Data Source:
- <u>Name</u>: United States Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS)
- <u>Link to Source</u>: https://www.census.gov/programs-surveys/acs/data.html

Year: 2015-2019

Source Geographic Level: Zip Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA)

Stratification: Black populations

Selection Rationale: Unemployment contributes to stress levels and negative mental health outcomes. Additionally, unemployment is directly linked to health factors such as insurance coverage, ability to afford care, and is a measure of socioeconomic status which contributes to many health disparities. Conversely, those who are experiencing mental illnesses and substance use disorders may face challenges in obtaining and sustaining employment.

Strengths and Limitations:
- **Strengths:**
    - [*Importance*] This measure provides information about socioeconomic status, one of the main drivers of population health disparities. Unemployment impacts the ability to afford and access health care (including access to health insurance) as well as to participate in behaviors that promote health. Unemployment has been found to be associated with increased incidence of various mental health outcomes such as suicide rates, depression, anxiety, and psychological stress.[1,2,3] Elevated levels of unemployment in the same geographic area can also impact communities due to an increased demand for services and a decrease in the tax base used to fund those services.[4] Unemployment contributes to stress levels and is a risk factor for negative health behaviors, such as substance misuse, that

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[1] Dooley, D., Fielding, J., & Levi, L. (1996). Health and unemployment. *Annual Review of Public Health*, *17*, 449–465. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.pu.17.050196.002313

[2] Wilson, S. H., & Walker, G. M. (1993). Unemployment and health: A review. *Public Health, 107*(3), 153–162. https://doi.org/10.1016/s0033-3506(05)80436-6

[3] Pharr, J.R., Moonie, S., & Bungum, T.J. (2012). The Impact of Unemployment on Mental and Physical Health, Access to Health Care and Health Risk Behaviors. *International Scholarly Research Notices*, *2012*, Article 483432. https://doi.org/10.5402/2012/483432

[4] Nichols, A., Mitchell, J., & Lindner, S. (2013). *Consequences of long-term unemployment.* The Urban Institute. https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/23921/412887-Consequences-of-Long-Term-Unemployment.PDF

can lead to a cascade of negative life consequences, such as loss of income and further health deterioration.[5]
- o [*Relevance and Usability*] This measure is easily interpretable and can be used by communities and policymakers to understand where the burden of unemployment is highest and where employment opportunities may be most needed.
- o [*Scientific Soundness*] ACS data provide valid and reliable estimates. This measure is advantageous because it is both simple to calculate and simple to communicate.
- o [*Feasibility*] This measure is readily available through the United States Census Bureau's American Community Survey (ACS), an ongoing survey that provides data in the year immediately following the year in which they are collected.
- **Limitations:**
  - o [*Equity*] This measure does not capture all aspects of unemployment, such as those who are underemployed or those have been out of the workforce for an extended period of time and are no longer looking for work. Underemployment is also linked to adverse mental health outcomes.[6]
  - o [*Scientific Soundness*] This measure is self-reported and depends on the accuracy of the person surveyed.

Calculation:

Overall Population:

$$Unemployment_{Overall} = \frac{unemployed\ individuals\ in\ the\ labor\ force}{total\ individuals\ \ in\ the\ labor\ force} \times 100\%$$

ACS tables and variables used:
- Table C18120: Employment Status by Disability Status (Civilian noninstitutionalized population 18 to 64 years)
  - C18120_002: Estimate Total In the labor force
  - C18120_006: Estimate Total In the labor force Unemployed

Black Populations:

$$Unemployment_{Black} = \frac{unemployed\ Black\ individuals\ in\ the\ labor\ force}{total\ Black\ individuals\ in\ the\ labor\ force} \times 100\%$$

[5] Murphy, G. C., & Athanasou, J. A. (1999). The effect of unemployment on mental health. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, *72*(1), 83-99. https://doi.org/10.1348/096317999166518

[6] Rosenthal, L., Carroll-Scott, A., Earnshaw, V. A., Santilli, A., & Ickovics, J. R. (2012). The importance of full-time work for urban adults' mental and physical health. *Social Science & Medicine, 75*(9), 1692–1696. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2012.07.003

ACS tables and variables used:

- Table 23002B: Sex By Age By Employment Status For The Population 16 Years And Over (Black Or African American Alone) (Black or African American alone population 16 years and over)
  - C23002B_004: Estimate Total: Male: 16 to 64 years: In labor force
  - C23002B_008: Estimate Total: Male: 16 to 64 years: In labor force: Civilian: Unemployed
  - C23002B_011: Estimate Total: Male: 65 years and over: In labor force:
  - C23002B_013: Estimate Total: Male: 65 years and over: In labor force: Unemployed
  - C23002B_017: Estimate Total: Female: 16 to 64 years: In labor force:
  - C23002B_021: Estimate Total: Female: 16 to 64 years: In labor force: Civilian: Unemployed
  - C23002B_024: Estimate Total: Female: 65 years and over: In labor force:
  - C23002B_026: Estimate Total: female: 65 years and over: In labor force: Unemployed: Estimate Total