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A decade lost to a housing crisis, a major recession and the closure of five casinos, has left Atlantic City reeling. The Atlantic City metropolitan area lost 25,300 jobs, or 16.5 percent, in the 2006-2015 period. During the same period, the area's gross domestic product declined 21.4 percent — the largest such loss among the nation's 382 metropolitan areas tracked by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The data, published in the [NJ Spotlight](#), was released this week in conjunction with the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University. According to Oliver Cooke, associate professor of Economics at Stockton, the effects of such economic distress on the area's residents have been profound.

Noting Atlantic City's "lost decade," Cooke said, "The metropolitan area's poverty rate climbed from 9.2 percent in 2006 to 14.3 percent in 2015, while the poverty rate for those younger than 18 years old rose to 22.3 percent from 13.2 percent."

But the South Jersey resort also shows signs of new economic life, Cooke said, citing the decision of Hard Rock International to buy and reopen the closed Taj Mahal casino, as well as the recent state brokered settlement of a tax dispute between the Borgata casino and Atlantic City, as positive developments, among other projects.