



Making Way for the Games

Homelessness and Housing Displacement in Olympic Host Cities



Author: Jasper Chew

Supervision and Editing: Nick Weinmeister

August 2026

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Background	3
Case Studies.....	3
<i>Atlanta 1996</i>	4
<i>Rio 2016</i>	6
<i>Paris 2024</i>	7
Lessons for Los Angeles	10
References	12

Introduction

Hosting the Olympic Games is often seen as a generational opportunity for urban growth and renewal and an all-around boon to cities. The promise of hosting can catalyze revitalization efforts, stimulate economic activity, spur job creation, and encourage investments and infrastructure upgrades that deliver real long-term benefits. More abstractly, the Games also elevate the host city to the global stage, fostering civic pride and creating social and cultural legacies. At the same time, hosting the Olympics carries significant risks. The Games can exact huge financial costs, strain public services, and worsen existing social challenges if not carefully managed. Past host cities have incurred significant debt to shoulder costs, namely the construction of sporting venues, Olympic Villages, and other infrastructure necessary to accommodate the large influx of visitors. These consequences are not inevitable; they require deliberate planning and policy choices to avoid them.

Los Angeles will host the upcoming 2028 Olympic Games, and a primary concern is how the event might impact the region's homelessness crisis. In past Olympics, host cities have used the Games as a pretext to remove "undesirable" populations to present an appealing, world-class image to international tourists and the media (Ludvigsen & Byrne, 2025). Common tactics include displacing households to build Olympic venues, street cleaning operations, forced busing and relocation, and passing quality-of-life ordinances that can be used to target people experiencing homelessness near sporting venues or other areas heavily frequented by tourists. These practices are often referred to as "social cleansing" by academic scholars who cover the Olympics, and they risk derailing the city's efforts to house people if deployed again. Los Angeles has the opportunity to learn from the successes and failures of previous host cities. This brief examines how past Olympic hosts have approached homelessness in the lead-up to and during the Olympic Games, focusing on official policy changes and enforcement strategies. Our main research question asks: What lessons can those approaches help inform Los Angeles as it prepares for the 2028 Olympics, particularly regarding their impacts on unhoused residents?

Key Takeaways

- **Recurring patterns of displacement and social cleansing emerge across Olympic host cities.** Our case studies reveal that cities use similar tactics to remove visible signs of poverty and their unhoused populations, including criminalization, relocation, clearing of encampments, and construction of Olympic venues and infrastructure at sites previously occupied by low-income households and people experiencing unsheltered homelessness
- **Host cities' Olympic preparations often lacked the housing and services necessary to protect their unhoused population.** Rio's leadership publicly pledged to minimize displacement, but over 77,000 people

were displaced in the years leading up to the Games. Relocation assistance was often not enough for residents to find housing. Paris officials deny that encampment clearances were related to the Olympics, despite evidence to the contrary.

- **Racial and ethnic targeting is a consistent theme.** The Paris 2024 Olympics disproportionately evicted African migrants and asylum seekers, leading to deportation in some cases. Policing in Atlanta specifically targeted African American men.
- **Several factors intensify the clash between the Olympics and Los Angeles's unhoused population.** Los Angeles's housing shortage, high unsheltered population, and the size of the LA28 Olympics heighten concerns. The Games will involve roughly 40 sporting facilities and venues, meaning widespread encampment clearances across the County, not just a select few neighborhoods or sites.

Background

The Olympics' detrimental effects on a host city's unhoused population and housing market are a recurring theme in the scholarly literature on the Games and large-scale sporting events. Historically, cities have displaced households to make way for Olympic-related venues. The London Development Agency demolished the Clays Lane estate, which housed about 450 people, for the 2012 Olympics (Naughton, 2008). The Tokyo Municipal Government demolished the Kasumigaoka public housing estate to build the Japan National Stadium for the 2020 Games. In addition to physical displacement facilitated by construction, cities have adopted enforcement strategies to expel unhoused people from their city centers and the public eye. Documented examples include the institutionalization of people experiencing homelessness and drug addiction in Athens 2004, the establishment of dispersal zones around venues in London 2012, the installation of hostile architecture in Paris 2024, or the forced relocation of unhoused people into temporary shelters during Montreal 1976 (Kennelly, 2013). Some scholars also describe an indirect "Olympic Effect" on housing markets, in which the Games contribute to speculative rent increases, rising property values, and gentrification, thereby increasing residents' risk of falling into homelessness (Kennelly, 2013).

Case Studies

This brief uses the Atlanta 1996, Rio 2016, and Paris 2024 Olympic Games as case studies. Paris and Rio were selected as two of the more recent hosts, and Atlanta as the last American host for the summer Games. The Tokyo 2020 Olympics were not selected because extenuating circumstances related to the COVID-19 pandemic and

travel bans on foreign ticket holders likely altered approaches to homelessness. Researchers have also documented similar impacts in other host cities, such as London, Beijing, Athens, and Sydney, but were not selected to maintain a focused comparative analysis rather than an exhaustive review of every Olympics. We survey the available academic and grey literature, most of which consists of qualitative studies. These studies rely heavily on qualitative and interpretive evidence due to a lack of inter-agency data gathering and coordination, making it difficult to draw more concrete conclusions about the causal relationship between the Games and homelessness (Rocha & Xiao, 2022). This case study analysis overcomes this lack of data by identifying patterns in plans, policies, and outcomes across multiple relevant host cities.

Atlanta 1996

In the six years leading up to the Games, Atlanta transformed its urban core through eminent domain, neighborhood redevelopment, quality-of-life ordinances that criminalized homelessness, and intense boosterism for the city's downtown. The transformation primarily occurred within a 2-mile radius of downtown, where most of the existing and planned sporting facilities were located, including the Olympic Stadium, Olympic Village, and Centennial Olympic Park. This area came to be known as the "Olympic Ring."

Displacement

Centennial Place and Centennial Olympic Park are prime examples of Atlanta's renewal efforts displacing low-income residents and increasing inflows into homelessness. Centennial Place replaced the Techwood and Clark Howell Homes, a public housing complex located between Downtown Atlanta and the Georgia Institute of Technology campus, where several events were slated to be held. Techwood-Clark housed approximately 1,115 families across 1,195 units (Diehl, 2018). These tenants were some of the city's poorest residents, with an average household income of \$4,142 in 1990 (Diehl, 2018). 79% of households in sixteen Olympic Ring neighborhoods had annual incomes less than \$20,000, and 92% of residents were Black (French & Disher, 1997). Atlanta's preparations for the Olympics coincided with a shift in federal housing policy away from direct public provision of housing toward market-based construction and the subsidization of housing demand. The Atlanta Housing Authority (AHA) established the Olympic Legacy Program, which leveraged federal funds to demolish and redevelop distressed public housing projects into mixed-income housing (Glover, 2009). The Techwood-Clark Homes' prime location near Olympic venues made it an ideal candidate for redevelopment.

The AHA displaced Techwood-Clark residents at an alarming rate. In 1992, the AHA began redevelopment by selling 4.5 acres of the property to the Georgia Board of Regents, displacing 114 families (Newman, 2002). The new housing was built for Olympic athletes and later converted into permanent student dormitories for Georgia Tech and Georgia State University. The Atlanta City Council did not approve the final redevelopment proposal until 1994, but in the meantime, Techwood-Clark went from 90% occupancy to 94.1% vacancy (Newman, 2002). 545 households received relocation assistance from the AHA, either through Section 8 housing voucher certificates (367 households) or relocation to another public housing unit (178 households) (Keating,

2000). This meant that just over half of the 1,115 households were evicted without any assistance and left to find housing on their own (Newman, 2002). Without the ability to track residents who did not receive assistance, there are no estimates as to how many displaced households entered homelessness.

The AHA successfully redeveloped the dilapidated Techwood-Clark housing into a new mixed-income community, but the result was still a net loss of affordability. The new project, Centennial Place, consisted of 900 units in total – 360 market-rate, 360 for former public housing residents, and 180 tax-credit-subsidized (Newman, 2002). Although 60% of the new units received some form of subsidy, the redevelopment fundamentally reduced the total number of units available to the city's poorest residents. Only 10% of the original Techwood-Clark residents, roughly 65 families, returned to Centennial Place after construction was completed (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999).

Immediately south of the Techwood-Clark property, a 21-acre park, dubbed Centennial Olympic Park, was built for the Games. That land was previously a blighted commercial district, which city leaders described as “the void,” a “cesspool,” and “cancer on the body of the city” (Rutheiser, 1997; Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999). This area, though, also had roughly 1,000 shelter beds, representing more than 10% of Atlanta's homeless shelter capacity (Gustafson, 2013; Rutheiser, 1997). These beds were lost during the redevelopment process, with no plans to rebuild shelter capacity elsewhere in the city. This net reduction in shelter beds had devastating consequences for the ability to serve the estimated 15,000 to 22,000 total unhoused individuals in Atlanta at the time (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999).

Social Cleansing

Atlanta paired the demolition of public housing and homeless shelters with aggressive policing and enforcement to foster this sanitized image of its downtown. The Atlanta City Council passed a series of six “quality of life” ordinances intended to remove the poor from downtown in the years leading up to, and immediately following, the Games. Although the ordinances did not specifically mention the term “homeless,” these ordinances made non-criminal, poverty-related behaviors grounds for arrest and prosecution (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999). They prohibited people from camping on public property, loitering in parking lots and garages, panhandling, entering abandoned or derelict buildings, removing items from trash bins, and spitting on sidewalks (Gustafson, 2013). The consequences for violating these ordinances varied, with fines up to \$1,000 and jail sentences of up to a year (Hopkins & Nackerud, 1999).

Atlanta heavily enforced these quality-of-life ordinances leading up to and during the Games. The Atlanta Police Department issued about 9,000 arrest citations between May 1995 and May 1996 (Smothers, 1996). Anita Beaty, Director of the Metro Atlanta Taskforce for the Homeless, alleged that police patrolled with mass-produced tickets pre-printed with “African American, Male, Homeless,” indicating a systematic and demographic-specific strategy to purge downtown (Gustafson, 2013). The Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless and the American Civil Liberties Union filed a federal lawsuit, *Williams v. City of Atlanta*, challenging the constitutionality of the quality-of-life ordinances. Federal Judge Owen J. Forrester issued a preliminary injunction ordering the city to stop arresting homeless people without probable cause just two days before the Opening Ceremony (Freiler & Holden, 2012). Atlanta Police suspended

enforcement of the ordinances, but much of the damage had already been done. Social cleansing still occurred indirectly during the Games. For example, security officials used fences and admission conditions to “keep out the riffraff” from Centennial Olympic Park, which came to be known as the “World’s Gathering Place” (Gustafson, 2013). The federal lawsuit against the city resulted in cash payments to homeless plaintiffs, a court order to stop arbitrary arrest, and mandatory police training. However, it was not officially settled until two years after the Games in May 1998 (Freiler & Holden, 2012).

In addition to forced removal via criminalization, people experiencing homelessness were also encouraged to relocate. In 1994, Project Homeward Bound, a nonprofit organization, began offering unhoused people free one-way bus tickets out of Atlanta, using Fulton County public funds (Gustafson, 2013). The organization offered unhoused people these tickets on the condition that recipients could prove they had a family or job waiting at their destination and signed a statement promising never to return (Seattle Times, 1996). Project Homeward Bound hardly verified whether individuals had support waiting for them, though. The Metro Atlanta Task Force for the Homeless received calls from cities in Alabama and Florida asking why homeless people were arriving, asking for help, and saying they had to leave Atlanta (Gustafson, 2013). No estimates are available on how many people accepted ticket offers or returned to Atlanta.

Rio 2016

Similar to Atlanta, Brazil viewed hosting the Olympics as an opportunity for urban regeneration. The stated focuses were “the transformation of the city, social inclusion (with a specific focus on homes, training, and jobs), youth and education, and sports (Kennelly, 2016). Regarding housing, government officials promised to limit and manage displacement and to deliver new low-income housing through public-private partnerships. The City of Rio de Janeiro Mayor Eduardo Paes and Secretary of Housing Jorge Bittar publicly stated that “whoever wants to stay, stays,” and that “no one is resettled if not for a very important reason” (Redden, 2017). Despite these promises, Rio's Olympic preparations resulted in one of the largest displacement campaigns associated with any modern Olympic Games. Between 2009 and 2015, an estimated 77,206 people (22,059 families) were removed from their homes, with approximately 6,600 families displaced or threatened with eviction specifically for Olympic-related projects (Muller & Gaffney, 2018). Redevelopment centered on new transportation infrastructure, the Olympic Park and Village in Barra da Tijuca, and broader urban revitalization projects.

Displacement

The favela of Vila Autódromo became the most prominent example of Olympic-related displacement. Once home to nearly 700 families, the community was almost entirely demolished to accommodate the Olympic Park and related infrastructure. Residents reported psychological pressure to accept relocation, a lack of transparency during negotiations, and, in some cases, violent confrontations with military police (Crout, 2018). Following years of organized resistance, only 20 families were ultimately permitted to remain in newly constructed homes on-site (Eisenhammer, 2015; Michelena, 2017). The official rehousing plan involved either relocating households to Minha Casa Minha Vida (MCMV), a newly constructed housing complex, or offering

financial compensation for relocation. The federal government also proposed a “Port Village,” which would house the Olympics workforce and later be converted into 5,000 social housing units. On all three accounts, the Brazilian government fell short of its promises. MCMV units were criticized for their poor construction quality, with some residents reporting failing pipes and leaking roofs (Michelena, 2017). The financial compensation to relocate was often inadequate and did not cover the cost of purchasing a new home (Redden, 2017). Residents were reportedly “not given adequate notice, compensation, and forced to relocate to low-income housing projects on the poorer outskirts of the city, where there is little or no urban infrastructure” (Bilak et al, 2016). Lastly, the 5,000 social housing units in the Port Village never materialized after the project became embroiled in corruption and bribery over construction contracts (Gold & Gold, 2024).

Social Cleansing

Rio paired large-scale redevelopment with efforts to remove visible signs of poverty from public spaces before the Games. Municipal authorities implemented aggressive “beautification” initiatives that increased police surveillance, harassment, and arrests of people experiencing homelessness, while critics described these measures as a strategy to sanitize the city for international visitors and media (Gold & Gold, 2024). Efforts targeting homeless youth were similarly criticized as symbolic rather than substantive, with the city adding only 100 shelter beds despite widespread need among children experiencing homelessness (Monico, 2016). The city also eliminated numerous bus routes connecting lower-income neighborhoods to central and affluent areas, thereby reducing mobility for poor residents while prioritizing transportation access for Olympic visitors (Redden, 2017).

International scrutiny of Rio’s poverty and drug issues following the 2014 World Cup directed more resources towards the city’s favela pacification programs. Police Pacification Units (UPPs) strategically expanded into favelas surrounding Olympic venues. Brazil’s Federal Police Chief, Leandro Daniello Coimbra, stated, “Before now, we have never had a chance to help people in the favelas, and they have been very isolated...but now that we have the World Cup coming to Brazil in 2014 and the Olympics coming to Rio in 2016, we have been able to change this...For so long, Rio has been divided, but this is our chance to bridge that gap” (Gold & Gold, 2024). These mega events prompted additional resources and spending on security operations, including the installation of mass CCTV surveillance (Gold & Gold, 2024). Approximately 85,000 security personnel were deployed in the favelas during the Games, including 23,000 soldiers (Kaiser & Jacobs, 2016).

Paris 2024

The Paris 2024 Olympic Games are the latest in the Olympics' ongoing pattern of displacement and social cleansing. Leading up to and during the Games, Paris cleared encampments and migrant squats near Olympic venues and bused homeless people to regional shelters in other cities.

Displacement

Paris chose to limit new venue construction for the Games, instead relying mostly on existing facilities. This approach was part of the city's push for "eco-realism," which promoted sustainability benchmarks to reduce the environmental and financial burdens associated with the Games (Doustaly, 2024). Utilizing existing facilities, temporary structures, and new construction that could be converted into permanent uses was a key part of their sustainability strategy. Due to limited space and capacity for new infrastructure in the city center, Paris chose to build its Olympic Village in the city's northern suburb of Seine-Saint-Denis and to leverage the Games to catalyze urban growth there (Doustaly, 2024). Development efforts were jointly governed by the Comité d'Organisation des Jeux Olympiques et Paralympiques (COJOP) and the Société de Livraison des Ouvrages Olympiques (SOLIDEO). New construction included the Olympic Village, the Olympic Aquatic Center, a new transportation hub, and an extension of existing transit service to the neighborhood. SOLIDEO included plans to convert the Olympic Village into a permanent neighborhood with 25% dedicated to public housing and 33% dedicated to subsidized affordable housing (Doustaly, 2024).

Seine-Saint-Denis, one of France's poorest areas, became the core focus of Paris' urban renewal efforts. Seine-Saint-Denis is a 90-square-mile department comprising 40 small cities and is described as "synonymous with poverty, immigration, and crime" (Alderman & Porter, 2024). The area's unemployment rate is greater than 20% and close to 33% of live in poverty (Alderman & Porter, 2024). 1 in 3 of the approximately 1.6 million residents is an immigrant, making it the most highly concentrated immigrant population in France (Hurtes, 2024). In previous bids to host, Paris claimed that the Olympic Village would not displace anyone because the proposed sites were abandoned industrial properties (COHRE, 2007). Paris possessed a surplus of brownfield sites, such as former factories, warehouses, and other dilapidated structures, it could take advantage of. However, these buildings became informal housing for a few thousand of Seine-Saint-Denis's homeless and impoverished immigrant residents due to Paris's high housing costs, a strained shelter system, and a lack of long-term affordable housing opportunities (Hurtes, 2024).

Paris's urban renewal efforts for Seine-Saint-Denis meant clearing these illegal squats. In 2023, the French government passed the Kasbarian-Berge law, an anti-squatting measure that streamlined eviction procedures for property owners and imposed significant fines and prison sentences on squatters (Hurtes, 2024). There are no official estimates of Seine-Saint-Denis' inventory of squats and their corresponding populations, but reporting from the New York Times claims that "dozens of squats [were closed], evicting over 3,000 people" during the lead-up to the Olympics (Hurtes, 2024). This included evicting 450 migrants, including 50 women and 20 children, living in a warehouse and 500 people living in an abandoned cement factory near the Olympic Village (Adamson, 2024; Hurtes, 2024). Many of those evicted were male, African migrants seeking asylum and awaiting court dates (Deley & Garriga, 2024). Homeless encampments along the Seine also became targets for clearance due to the river's high visibility (Janetsky, 2024). Those evicted had little luck securing shelter beds through the city's emergency housing line, often waiting months, and residents reported reduced access to social housing (Janetsky, 2024).

Social Cleansing

A central component of Paris' social cleansing efforts was a large-scale, semi-involuntary busing program that relocated homeless people to temporary shelters in other cities. The program, referred to as SAS, bused 50 to 150 people weekly to one of 10 regional shelters over more than a year leading up to the Games (Mawad & Colliva, 2023). Official estimates from the Parisian government indicate nearly 5,000 people were bused out of the city (Hurtes, 2024). According to interviews with those displaced, police falsely promised housing and social assistance to pressure people onto the buses. Individuals received "random tickets" to Lyon, Marseille, Bordeaux, Orleans, Besancon, and a few other cities, some of which were hundreds of miles from Paris (Hurtes, 2024). They boarded buses for the city they were assigned to, regardless of whether they had any connections or support networks there. Once they arrived, individuals were placed in temporary shelters, some of which lacked staff, social workers, or support services (Hurtes, 2024). These shelters offered only three-week stays, after which individuals were ordered to vacate, leaving many to return to the streets. French homeless advocates estimated that 25% to 30% of people displaced by the program were back on the streets, just in a different city (Mawad & Colliva, 2023).

Some of those bused out of Paris before the Olympics were expelled from the country altogether. When individuals arrived at their destination city, they were screened for asylum status, and several were issued deportation orders. There are no official estimates as to how many immigrants were deported through SAS, though French advocates have described the program as "an antechamber to deportation" (Hurtes, 2024). In 2024, approximately 100,000 people experienced homelessness in the Paris region, accounting for nearly half of the country's unhoused population (Hurtes, 2024). About 3,500 of those lived unsheltered on the streets of Paris (Garriga, 2024). French authorities have an annual informal truce that limits evictions during the colder winter months (Garriga, 2024). When that year's truce expired around April, Paris police conducted early morning raids targeting street encampments, shelters, and abandoned buildings near the Olympic Village and along the Seine River (Adamson, 2024). Internal emails between officials revealed that the program's goal was to "identify people on the street in sites near Olympic venues" and move them before the Games (Hurtes, 2024). Immigrants, mostly from former French colonies in northern and western Africa, make up a substantial share of Paris's homeless population (Janetsky, 2024). There are no official estimates of the exact percentage, but several high-profile SAS operations took place in migrant camps, including Vitry-sur-Seine, a 450-person camp that was cleared just a few months before the Games (Adamson, 2024).

The French government has consistently denied that these programs were prompted by or connected to the Olympic Games. The official justification for clearing encampments was public health, safety, and security concerns, as well as attempts to relieve the strain on emergency housing and services in Paris (Charlton, 2023). Leading up to the Olympics, hotels canceled housing contracts with the government to accommodate the anticipated influx of tourists, reducing the city's emergency shelter capacity by about 5,000 hotel beds (Mawad & Colliva, 2023). The SAS program was meant to offset this loss by redistributing shelter demand throughout the region. Local officials from destination cities condemned the program, though, claiming the Parisian government did not consult them before people began arriving (Hurtes, 2024).

Lessons for Los Angeles

The experiences of Atlanta, Rio de Janeiro, and Paris demonstrate that the Olympic Games can exacerbate existing housing and homelessness challenges, creating disastrous results for the host city's unhoused population. In each case, city leaders justified displacement, increased policing, or the relocation of unhoused populations as necessary to improve public safety, beautify the environment, or facilitate redevelopment. While these strategies often succeeded in reducing the visible presence of homelessness around Olympic venues, they did little to address its structural causes and, in many instances, exacerbated housing insecurity for the populations they targeted.

Unlike many previous host cities, Los Angeles possesses a significant advantage in that the 2028 Games are being organized as a largely "no-build" Olympics. The current venue plan relies primarily on existing stadiums, arenas, and university facilities, as well as temporary venues, rather than constructing new permanent Olympic infrastructure. This "no-build" strategy reduces hosting costs and lessens the risk of construction-driven residential displacement, as seen in Downtown Atlanta and the Rio favelas. However, reusing existing venues and infrastructure does not entirely eliminate the possibility of indirect displacement driven by property speculation, rising rents, and the loss of units to short-term rental conversions. The housing market in Los Angeles is already extremely tight. According to the California Housing Partnership, 485,667 low-income renter households across LA County do not have access to an affordable home (CHPC, 2026). A massive influx of visitors and spike in demand may strain the city's housing market, especially as Mayor Karen Bass proposes expanding the short-term rental market by allowing owners of second homes to rent them out on a short-term basis (Goldberg, 2026). This policy change threatens to take more residential units off the market. A no-build strategy can prevent some residential displacement, but it does not address the other housing-related issues associated with hosting the Games.

One of the main risks facing Los Angeles revolves around how the city addresses unhoused people and encampments located near Olympic venues and other highly frequented areas. Recent experiences in Paris illustrate how encampment removals, increased policing, and the relocation of unhoused residents can occur even during a "no-build" Olympics. Los Angeles has one of the largest unsheltered populations in the nation, with 49,002 individuals across the county, 29,115 of which are in the City of Los Angeles. Encampment clearing and enforcement tactics, including a camping ban in designated zones around the city, are already part of LA's approach to homelessness. Encampment clearings near SoFi Stadium in the lead-up to the 2022 Super Bowl present worrying signs (Venegas, 2022). There are over 40 competition venues across 18 "Olympic zones" in the greater LA area (LA28, 2026). This poses serious risks for displacement across the entire region.

Previous host cities demonstrate that policies focused on removing homelessness from public view rarely produce lasting improvements. In January 2026, the Los Angeles County Homeless Services and Housing Department released a report outlining best practices and resource tools that emphasize a service-oriented approach to encampment resolution. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass has also vowed not to bus

unhoused people out of Olympic areas (Dillon et al., 2024). These developments are encouraging signs as preparations for 2028 continue.

Lastly, the potential federal intervention by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) still remains a serious cause for concern, given the possibility of heightened immigration enforcement and security operations during the Games. The presence of federal law enforcement during the Games is guaranteed as part of the city's agreement to host. In the first few months of 2026, ICE arrested 2,612 people in the LA area, nearly half of whom were born in Mexico (Ozebek, 2026). Latine people account for roughly 45% of the county's unhoused population (LA County Chief Executive Office, 2025). There is a strong possibility that targeted enforcement and racial profiling may occur during the Games.

Los Angeles has the opportunity to demonstrate that the Olympics can be successfully hosted without repeating patterns of displacement and social cleansing that have characterized many previous host cities. Installing clear safeguards can prevent undermining long-term efforts to resolve its homelessness crisis. The Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority has managed to permanently house nearly 100,000 people over the last four years (LAHSA, 2026). The city should not let the Games derail its efforts to resolve this crisis.

References

- Adamson, T. (2024, April 17). *French police evict hundreds from abandoned Paris warehouse ahead of Olympics*. <https://apnews.com/article/paris-olympics-squat-eviction-police-warehouse-migrants-b79bea0ed67c47c43874667b7c21f63b>
- Alderman, L., & Porter, C. (2024, February 20). Can the Olympics Rejuvenate One of France's Poorest Corners? *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/02/20/world/europe/france-olympics-paris-st-denis-poverty-immigrants.html>
- Bilak, A., Cardona-Fox, G., Ginnetti, J., Rushing, E., Scherer, I., Swain, M., Walicki, N., & Yonetani, M. (2016). *Global Report on Internal Displacement 2016*. Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre. <https://www.internal-displacement.org/globalreport2016/>
- Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE). (2006). *Fair Play For Housing Rights: Mega Events, Olympic Games and Housing Rights—Opportunities for the Olympic Movement and Others*. Geneva International Academic Network.
- Charlton, A. (2023, October 30). Activists urge Paris Olympics organizers to respect the rights of migrants and homeless people. <https://apnews.com/article/france-paris-olympics-protest-6e8f270odda4d542cd7a9015070b00fc>
- Crout, L. (2018). Forced Evictions, Homelessness, and Destruction: Summer “Games”? Olympic Violations of the Right to Adequate Housing in Rio de Janeiro. *Notre Dame Journal of International & Comparative Law*, 8(1), 35. <https://scholarship.law.nd.edu/ndjicl/vol8/iss1/7>
- Diehl, W. J. (2018). An Olympic Relay Race—Passing Atlanta's Public Housing to Public-Private Partnerships from the 1996 Olympic Games to Today. *Journal of Affordable Housing & Community Development Law*, 26(3), 575–612. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26408220>
- Dillon, L., Zahniser, D., & Smith, D. (2024, August 16). Bass vows not to bus homeless people out for 2028 Olympics. But what will L.A. do? *Los Angeles Times*. <https://www.latimes.com/homeless-housing/story/2024-08-16/la-olympics-homelessness>
- Doustaly, C. (2024). Paris 2024. In *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896-2032* (4th ed.). Routledge.
- Eisenhammer, S. (2015, February 5). Amid rubble, Rio residents fight Olympics evictions. *Reuters*. <https://www.reuters.com/article/sports/amid-rubble-rio-residents-fight-olympics-evictions-idUSKBNOL924L/>
- Freiler, A., & Holden, M. (2012). Homelessness in the Livable City: Public Space Regulation in Olympic City, Vancouver's Poorest Neighborhood. *Critical Planning*, 19. <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5xf1g8m9>
- French, S. P., & Disher, M. E. (1997). Atlanta and the Olympics: A One-Year Retrospective. *Journal of the American Planning Association*, 63(3), 379–392. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01944369708975930>
- Garriga, N. (2024, April 30). Ahead of the Paris Olympics, police clear a migrant camp near City Hall. *AP News*. <https://apnews.com/article/france-paris-olympics-migrants-police-security-camp-2dde4d2cccb8b7d9b9914c3798530fe5>

- Glover, R. L. (2009). The Atlanta Blueprint: Transforming Public Housing Citywide. In H. G. Cisneros & L. Engdahl (Eds.), *From Despair to Hope* (pp. 145–167). Brookings Institution Press. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.7864/j.ctt128osf.13>
- Gold, J., & Gold, M. M. (Eds.). (2024). *Olympic Cities: City Agendas, Planning, and the World's Games, 1896 – 2032* (4th ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003298175>
- Gustafson, S. (2013). Displacement and the Racial State in Olympic Atlanta 1990–1996. *Southeastern Geographer*, 53(2), 198–213. <https://doi.org/10.1353/sgo.2013.0016>
- Homeless encampment near SoFi Stadium cleared away ahead of Super Bowl. (2022, February 11). NBC News. <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/homeless-encampment-sofi-stadium-cleared-away-ahead-super-bowl-rcna14446>
- Hopkins, E., & Nackerud, L. (1999). An Analysis of Atlanta's Ordinance Prohibiting Urban Camping: Passage and Early Implementation. *Journal of Social Distress and the Homeless*, 8(4), 269–289. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1021348222248>
- Hurtes, S. (2024, July 20). The Olympics Is Transforming Their Neighborhood. And Kicking Them Out. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/2024/07/20/world/europe/france-paris-immigration-homeless-olympics.html>
- Janetsky, M. (2024, July 25). Migrants and homeless people are cleared out of Paris during the Olympics. <https://apnews.com/article/olympics-2024-paris-migrant-camp-3ef2a08d8da1085148ed409dcb44d6f6>
- Kassenbrock, R. (2026, July 24). A Statement on the 2026 Homeless Count. *LA County Homeless Services & Housing*. <https://homeless.lacounty.gov/news/a-statement-on-the-2026-homeless-count/>
- Keating, L., & Flores, C. A. (2000). Sixty and Out: Techwood Homes Transformed by Enemies and Friends. *Journal of Urban History*, 26(3), 275–311. <https://doi.org/10.1177/009614420002600301>
- Kennelly, J. (2015). 'You're making our city look bad': Olympic security, neoliberal urbanization, and homeless youth. *Ethnography*, 16(1), 3–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1466138113513526>
- Le Deley, J., & Garriga, N. (2024, April 23). Police clear out a migrant camp in central Paris. Activists say it's a pre-Olympics sweep | AP News. <https://apnews.com/article/paris-migrants-eviction-olympics-754956a0027d0222c52b67692fa44eb3>
- Lee Ludvigsen, J. A., & Byrne, S. (2025). In the shadow of sport mega-events: A critical analysis of the nexus between evictions, displacements, securitized gentrification and children's rights. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, 60(4), 572–590. <https://doi.org/10.1177/10126902241276258>
- Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority. (2026). Greater Los Angeles Homelessness Count 2026 Slide Deck. Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority. <https://www.lahsa.org/documents?id=10115-hc-2026-data-ppt-slide-deck.pdf>
- Mawad, D., & Colliva, C. (2023, September 29). France moves homeless people out of Paris as city prepares for next summer's Olympics. <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/09/26/europe/paris-france-homeless-relocation-olympics-intl-cmd>
- Michelena, L. (2017, August 4). A year later, Olympic displaced are left to rebuild lives. <https://apnews.com/article/298bd6f3e4434aea93c132b97ed6b339>

- Monico, G. (2016). Brazil's Forgotten Children: Homelessness in the Face of the Olympic Games: Rio de Janeiro's plan to reduce homelessness prior to the 2016 Olympic Games does not address the long term issues behind child homelessness. *Harvard International Review*, 37(2), 13–14.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/26445571>
- Müller, M., & Gaffney, C. (2018). Comparing the Urban Impacts of the FIFA World Cup and Olympic Games From 2010 to 2016. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues*, 42(4), 247–269. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0193723518771830>
- Naughton, C. (2008, June 2). Displaced by London's Olympics. *The Guardian*.
<https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2008/jun/02/olympics2012>
- Newman, H. (2002). *Atlanta Housing Authority's Olympic Legacy Program: Public Housing Projects To Mixed Income Communities*, The.
- Ozebek, K. (2026, April 1). ICE arrests across LA area fall sharply this year after a 2025 surge. *ABC7 Los Angeles*. <https://abc7.com/post/ice-arrests-plummet-los-angeles-after-2025-surge/18824323/>
- Redden, T. (2017). *Passing the Torch—UF Digital Collections*. University of Florida.
<https://patron.uflib.ufl.edu/UFE0051520/00001/pdf>
- Rocha, C. M., & Xiao, Z. (2022). Sport Mega-Events and Displacement of Host Community Residents: A Systematic Review. *Frontiers in Sports and Active Living*, 3, 805567. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fspor.2021.805567>
- Rutheiser, C. (1997). Making Place In The Nonplace Urban Realm: Notes On The Revitalization Of Downtown Atlanta. *Urban Anthropology and Studies of Cultural Systems and World Economic Development*, 26(1), 9–42.
<https://www.jstor.org/stable/40553315>
- Seattle Times. (1996, March 22). *Olympics—Atlanta 'Cleanup' Includes One-Way Tickets For Homeless* | *The Seattle Times*.
<https://archive.seattletimes.com/archive/19960322/2320280/olympics---atlanta-cleanup-includes-one-way-tickets-for-homeless>
- Smothers, R. (1996, July 1). As Olympics Approach, Homeless Are Not Feeling at Home in Atlanta. *The New York Times*. <https://www.nytimes.com/1996/07/01/us/as-olympics-approach-homeless-are-not-feeling-at-home-in-atlanta.html>