

Designing the Future Together: Latino Communities and California's AI Agenda



A Report on the June 2026 AI Policy Convening of California State Leadership and Latino Community Stakeholders

July 2026

Overview

An unprecedented convening, held on June 17th in Sacramento, California, brought together a diverse coalition of Latino and community stakeholders (see Appendix A for the full list) and senior leaders from the Newsom administration (see Appendix B for the full list) to discuss the opportunities and challenges that artificial intelligence (AI) presents for Latino and other largely working-class communities in California. The two-hour convening was structured to move from broad economic and workforce issues around AI to two more targeted consumer-protection topics — tech-enabled fraud and child online safety — with dedicated time after each session for open dialogue and recommendations from attendees (see the full agenda in Appendix C).

California is the fourth-largest economy in the world, the birthplace of the tech industry, and the nation's top pipeline for tech talent. It is home to the country's most highly valued tech companies, its most successful pre-seed startups, and 33 of the top 50 privately held AI companies globally. California is uniquely positioned to benefit from this talent and leadership in the AI economy.

The convening on June 17th followed the Governor's appointment of four Latino leaders¹ to separate California AI working groups, reflecting growing recognition of the need for Latino representation in the state's AI policymaking. Organizers noted that Latino voices remained largely absent from many of the broader state, industry, and policy discussions shaping California's AI future. While Governor Newsom's [Executive Order on Artificial Intelligence \(N-6-26\)](#) provided an important policy backdrop, Latino leaders sought to build on these appointments by creating a dedicated forum where community stakeholders could engage directly with state leaders and help inform the development of California's AI agenda.

Throughout the discussion, a central theme emerged: California cannot build an inclusive AI future without Latino leadership. Participants stressed that officials must not wait to consult Latino communities until after key decisions have been made. Instead, Latinos should be active partners in shaping the policies, investments, governance structures, and economic opportunities that will define the state's AI future. **As nearly 40 percent of California's population, Latino leaders have a profound stake in — and must help lead — the effort to reduce the risk that increasingly powerful AI systems cause severe, large-scale harm to Californians and humanity.**

The convening revealed broad agreement that artificial intelligence represents both a historic opportunity and a significant challenge for Latino communities. Participants expressed optimism about AI's potential to increase business productivity, support entrepreneurship, improve government services, expand access to information, and create new pathways to economic mobility. At the same time, attendees raised concerns that existing inequities could be amplified if Latino communities remain excluded from decision-making processes, workforce development opportunities, and the economic gains associated with AI adoption.

State officials provided updates on California's evolving AI strategy, including initiatives focused on workforce development, small business adoption, public participation, consumer protection, and

¹ Four Latino leaders were appointed to state AI-related bodies under the Newsom Administration: Mayra Alvarez (Protecting Child Online Safety), Claudia Ruiz (Countering Tech Fraud), and Efrain Escobedo (Technology, Economic Development, and Workforce) were appointed as official members of the California Innovation Council. Orson Aguilar was appointed to the Countering Tech Fraud Taskforce, a separate body under DFPI and the Governor's Office.

responsible governance. Administration leaders emphasized that California is taking a broad view of AI's workforce impacts and is examining not only technology occupations, but also administrative, customer service, accounting, and other occupations that may face significant transformation as AI adoption accelerates. Participants welcomed this approach and encouraged the state to continue centering workers and communities that have historically been overlooked in technology policy discussions.



Workforce preparation emerged as one of the most urgent priorities. Stakeholders noted that many Latino workers are concentrated in occupations that may experience significant change as AI technologies become more widely adopted. Participants called for proactive investments in workforce development, accessible training opportunities, multilingual educational resources, and pathways that allow workers to build AI-related skills before large-scale disruptions occur. Several attendees also emphasized the importance of including undocumented workers and individuals participating in the informal economy in future conversations about AI's labor market impacts.

Participants also highlighted the need to address foundational barriers to digital inclusion. Many communities continue to face challenges related to broadband access, digital literacy, language accessibility, and technology affordability. Attendees cautioned that efforts to expand AI adoption and workforce training will have limited impact unless these underlying barriers are addressed simultaneously. The discussion reinforced the idea that digital inclusion remains a prerequisite for equitable participation in the AI economy.

For Latino-owned businesses, participants viewed AI as both a significant opportunity and a potential source of competitive disadvantage if adoption gaps persist. Organizations serving entrepreneurs reported growing interest in AI tools but noted substantial variation in awareness, technical readiness, and access to support. Stakeholders emphasized the need for practical, community-based assistance that helps entrepreneurs understand how AI can be applied to improve operations, reach customers, and strengthen

competitiveness. Participants agreed that California has an opportunity to position Latino-owned businesses as early adopters and beneficiaries of AI rather than late adopters attempting to catch up.

Several participants raised concerns about the environmental impacts associated with AI infrastructure, particularly the expansion of large-scale data centers. Discussions focused on issues such as water consumption, energy demand, air quality, noise pollution, and the concentration of environmental burdens in working-class communities and communities of color. Attendees encouraged policymakers to ensure that environmental justice considerations remain part of California's broader AI strategy.

Civil rights and consumer protection were also prominent themes throughout the convening. Participants emphasized the importance of protecting workers and consumers from algorithmic discrimination, biased hiring systems, workplace surveillance, discriminatory lending practices, and AI-enabled fraud. Community leaders stressed that many of the inequities present in existing systems could be replicated or amplified through automated technologies if appropriate safeguards are not established early.

Underlying many of these discussions was a broader conversation about economic inclusion and wealth creation. Participants repeatedly framed AI through the lens of Latino prosperity, asking not only how communities can adapt to technological change, but also who will own, build, govern, and benefit from AI technologies in the future. Attendees emphasized that the long-term impact of AI on Latino communities will depend largely on ownership, participation, representation, and access to emerging opportunities.

Despite the challenges identified, the convening was marked by a spirit of collaboration and shared purpose. Participants expressed appreciation for the administration's willingness to engage directly with Latino leaders and viewed the gathering as an important first step toward building a more inclusive statewide AI strategy. Strong support emerged for continued collaboration between state agencies, community organizations, educational institutions, business-serving organizations, and civil rights advocates to ensure that community perspectives inform future policy development and implementation.

The convening underscored both the urgency and the opportunity of this moment. As California continues to shape the future of artificial intelligence, participants agreed that leadership will ultimately be measured not only by technological innovation but by whether the benefits of that innovation are broadly shared. The discussion made clear that California has an opportunity to establish a national model for inclusive AI governance. Such a model must ensure that Latino communities are not merely adapting to the future of AI but actively helping to shape it.

California's Executive Order

State officials provided an overview of the Governor's recently issued Executive Order on Artificial Intelligence and Economic Development.

The Executive Order focuses on five interconnected priorities:

1. Empowering workers to share in the benefits of AI.
2. Preparing for employment disruption and workforce transitions.
3. Supporting business competitiveness and AI adoption.
4. Developing public policy frameworks for responsible AI governance.
5. Expanding workforce training and skills development.

Officials emphasized that the administration is intentionally looking beyond traditional “tech worker” conversations and is closely examining potential impacts on administrative staff, office support occupations, accounting, customer service, and other occupations that may face earlier automation pressures than many anticipated.

The administration noted that California’s workforce system already serves hundreds of thousands of Californians annually through apprenticeship and earn-and-learn programs and intends to leverage those systems as AI-related workforce needs evolve.

Small Business AI Adoption

The Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development (GO-Biz) shared its ongoing efforts to support AI adoption among California's small-business community. Current initiatives include:

- Partnerships with major AI companies to provide educational webinars and training.
- Multilingual outreach and educational resources.
- Exploration of employee ownership and ESOP models as strategies for addressing workforce transitions.
- Support for regional economic development organizations and business-serving intermediaries.

Participants noted that AI adoption among small businesses represents a significant opportunity, but cautioned that disparities in access, technical knowledge, and resources could leave many Latino-owned businesses behind if support systems are not intentionally designed for them.

Workforce Development and Labor Market Preparation

The Labor and Workforce Development Agency outlined several initiatives designed to prepare workers for AI-related economic changes. These efforts include:

- Analysis of labor market impacts using state and university research.
- Development of rapid-response systems for AI-related layoffs.
- Exploration of micro-credential programs designed to provide practical AI skills in shorter, more accessible formats.
- Coordination with regional workforce development boards through California’s Jobs First regional economic development framework.

Officials repeatedly stressed the importance of gathering community-based intelligence and local-level observations to supplement existing labor market data.

Engaged California

The Office of Data and Innovation introduced participants to the [Engaged California](#) platform, a statewide digital engagement initiative designed to gather public input on major policy issues. The platform is currently conducting a statewide conversation regarding AI and workforce impacts. Key features include:

- Statewide participation opportunities.
- Spanish-language access and translation capabilities.
- AI-assisted analysis of large volumes of community feedback.

- New demographic measurement approach designed to improve representation and visibility of Latino populations.

State leaders encouraged participants and their networks to engage with the platform and contribute perspectives regarding AI's impacts on workers, businesses, and communities.

Fraud Prevention and Consumer Protection

The Department of Financial Protection and Innovation discussed emerging concerns related to AI-enabled scams, fraud, and financial exploitation. Highlights included:

- Creation of a multi-sector anti-fraud task force.
- Increased coordination among financial institutions, technology companies, telecommunications providers, and community organizations.
- Expanded consumer education and victim support efforts.
- Enforcement actions involving cryptocurrency-related fraud schemes.

Participants emphasized that culturally relevant outreach and trusted community messengers will be essential to protecting vulnerable populations from increasingly sophisticated AI-enabled scams.

Key Themes from Latino Community Leaders

1. Latino representation must be built into the structure of AI efforts at all levels

The strongest and most consistent theme emerging from the convening was the need for meaningful Latino participation in AI governance and decision-making. Participants noted that Latino voices remain underrepresented across the institutions shaping the future of artificial intelligence, including technology companies, research institutions, advisory councils, and policy bodies. While attendees welcomed the state's efforts to engage Latino communities, many emphasized that representation should not be measured solely by attendance at meetings or consultation processes. Rather, meaningful inclusion requires influence over policy development, resource allocation, implementation decisions, and accountability mechanisms. Participants repeatedly challenged policymakers to move beyond symbolic inclusion and toward sustained partnership models that provide Latino communities with a substantive role in shaping California's AI agenda.

2. Workforce impacts extend beyond technology occupations

Participants welcomed California's recognition that AI-related disruption will affect a broad range of occupations beyond software engineering and technical professions. Discussion focused on administrative staff, office support workers, customer service representatives, accounting and bookkeeping professionals, service-sector employees, and contingent workers, many of whom are disproportionately represented within Latino communities. Attendees stressed the importance of preparing workers before large-scale displacement occurs and highlighted the need for workforce strategies that address both formal and informal labor markets. Several participants also emphasized that undocumented workers and individuals working outside traditional employment systems are often excluded from workforce planning conversations and should be incorporated into future research and policy development efforts.

3. The digital divide remains a foundational barrier to AI inclusion

Throughout the discussion, participants emphasized that AI readiness cannot be separated from broader challenges related to digital equity. Persistent disparities in broadband access, digital literacy, technology affordability, language accessibility, and access to training continue to affect many Latino communities. Attendees cautioned that investments in AI workforce development may fail to reach intended beneficiaries if these foundational barriers remain unaddressed. Many argued that California's AI strategy must include parallel investments in digital inclusion to ensure that Latino communities are equipped to participate fully in emerging opportunities.

4. Latino-owned businesses need practical and accessible AI support

Organizations serving entrepreneurs reported growing curiosity and interest in AI among Latino business owners, but noted significant variation in adoption across industries, business size, age, technical familiarity, and access to support networks. Participants highlighted a need for trusted technical assistance, multilingual educational resources, peer learning opportunities, and practical demonstrations that illustrate tangible business applications of AI. Rather than viewing Latino-owned businesses as future adopters, attendees emphasized the opportunity to position these firms as early beneficiaries of AI-enabled productivity gains and innovation. Achieving this goal will require intentional outreach and support systems tailored to the realities of small business owners.

5. Environmental, civil rights, and consumer protection concerns must be addressed early

Participants expressed concern that the rapid expansion of AI technologies could create new risks or amplify existing inequities unless appropriate safeguards are established quickly. Discussion highlighted environmental concerns associated with data center development, including water consumption, energy demand, air quality impacts, and other burdens that often fall disproportionately on working-class communities and communities of color. Civil rights advocates also raised concerns regarding algorithmic bias, discriminatory hiring systems, workplace surveillance, and unequal access to financial products and services. Participants emphasized that many harms historically embedded within existing systems could be replicated or intensified through automated technologies if equity considerations are not incorporated into governance frameworks from the outset.

6. AI's impact on wealth creation will depend on ownership and participation

A recurring theme throughout the convening was the relationship between AI and long-term Latino economic mobility. Participants framed AI not only as a technological issue but also as a wealth-building issue, raising questions about who will own AI-enabled businesses, benefit from productivity gains, control data, and capture the value created by emerging technologies. Many stressed that the long-term impact of AI on Latino prosperity will depend on whether Latino communities are positioned as creators, entrepreneurs, investors, and decision-makers rather than solely as consumers of AI products and services. Participants said that ensuring broad participation in the AI economy will be essential to preventing existing wealth disparities from widening in the years ahead.

Closing Reflection

The convening underscored both the urgency and the opportunity of this moment. Artificial intelligence is advancing rapidly, and California is already emerging as a national leader in shaping its future. Participants

emphasized that leadership will ultimately be measured not only by technological innovation but by whether the benefits of that innovation reach all, including Latino and working-class communities.

For Latino communities, the challenge is not simply adapting to an AI-driven future. It is helping design that future. The conversation made clear that California possesses the talent, institutions, community leadership, and public commitment necessary to build a more inclusive AI ecosystem. The work ahead will require sustained collaboration, measurable accountability, and continued investment in ensuring Latino communities are fully represented in the decisions that will shape California's economic future.



We express our gratitude to the Governor's Office and to the many staff across agencies who prepared for and participated in this convening. Their willingness to engage candidly, share both progress and gaps, and commit to ongoing dialogue reflects the kind of engagement Latino communities have long sought on emerging technology.

We also want to recognize the Latino leaders and organizations who made this convening possible by giving their time, expertise, and organizational resources to participate, often on short notice and on top of already stretched capacity. Many of these leaders and their teams stepped away from their own pressing priorities to help build this dialogue, and that commitment should not go unnoticed. Their willingness to show up, prepare, and speak candidly is what made a substantive conversation possible in the first place.

Looking ahead, we ask that this convening not be treated as a one-time event, but as the first of a recurring practice, one that carries forward regardless of administration. Concretely, we recommend three things: formal mechanisms for Latino community input into the AI working groups beyond this single session; a commitment to follow-on convenings at regular intervals; and early engagement with California's next governor so that this model of direct dialogue is built into the next administration's approach from day one, not adopted after the fact.

For Latino communities, the task ahead is not simply adapting to an AI-driven future. It is helping design the future we want. We're ready to keep doing that work alongside the state, and we look forward to turning today's conversation into a sustained, measurable partnership.

Appendix A: List of Community Leaders

Community leaders who participated in the June 17th AI Policy Convening.

Full Name	Job Title	Agency/Office
Mayra Alvarez	President and CEO	Children's Partnership
Diana Amaya	Vice President of Programs	HOPE
Amada Armenta	Director	UCLA LPPI
Nora Benavidez	Sr. Counsel	Free Press
German Cash	California State Director	Hispanic Federation
Brenda Castillo	President and CEO	NHMC
Leonel Cosio	Director of Technology and Systems	Unity Council
Sonja Diaz	Founder and Managing Director	Unseen
Rudy Espinoza	President and CEO	Inclusive Action for the City
Norma Fernandez	CEO	EveryoneOn
George Galvis	President and CEO	CURYJ
Lili Gangas	Chief Technology Community Officer	Kapor Foundation
Camille Llanes-Fontanilla	Vice President, Community Impact & Systems Change	The Sobrato Foundation
Carolina Martinez	President and CEO	CAMEO
Marlene Orozco	Sr. Research Advisor	LatinoProsperity
Iliana Perez	President and CEO	Immigrants Rising
Amanda Renteria	President and CEO	Code for America
Yvette Renteria	Chief of Programs	Common Sense Media
Cathy Rodriguez	President and CEO	Sacramento Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
Claudia Ruiz	Sr. Civil Rights Policy Advisory	UnidosUS
Fred Sotelo	President and CEO	Tolteca Corp
Jonathan Mehta Stein	Chief Program Officer	TechEquity
Max Vargas	President and CEO	Greenlining Institute

Appendix B: List of Government Participants

State officials and government representatives who participated in the June 17th AI Policy Convening.

Full Name	Job Title	Agency/Office
Brooks Allen	Executive Director	State Board of Education
Ismael Contreras	Chief Deputy Appointments Secretary	CA Governor's Office
Emily Desai	Chief Deputy Director	Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development
Melinda Grant	Undersecretary	Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency
Nick Maduros	Secretary	Government Operations Agency
Jeffery Marino	Director	Office of Data and Innovation
Randi Michel	Senior Advisor for Technology	Governor's Office
Lila Mirrashidi	Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary	Governor's Office
KC Mohseni	Commissioner	Department of Financial Protection and Innovation
Maricela Rodriguez	Deputy Cabinet Secretary for Civic Engagement and Strategic Partnerships	Governor's Office
Jacque Roberts	Undersecretary	Labor and Workforce Development Agency
Caitlin Ruppel	Director of CA for All Kids	Office of the First Partner
Livia Shmavonian	Senior Advisor for Workforce and Economic Development	Governor's Office
Christina Tetreault	Deputy Commissioner	Department of Financial Protection and Innovation
Sandy Uribe	Chief Deputy Cabinet Secretary	Governor's Office

Appendix C: Agenda

Latino Community Convening on California AI Policy

June 17, 2025 • 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Clifford L. Allenby Building, First Floor Conference Room

1215 O St, Sacramento, CA 95814

ABOUT THIS CONVENING

We invite you to an in-person convening at the Governor's Office to help shape the future of California's AI policy. To address the wide-ranging impacts of AI, you will be engaging directly with senior state officials across multiple agencies, including labor, education, business development, consumer services, and government operations.

AGENDA

10:00 – 10:05 | Welcome

- Randi Michel, Deputy Cabinet Secretary & Senior Advisor for Technology, Governor's Office
- Orson Aguilar, President & CEO, LatinoProsperity

10:05-10:10 | Introductions

10:10 – 11:00 | Economic Impacts of AI

- Overview of **Executive Order N-6-26** and related work with the Innovation Council (Governor's Office, Labor and Workforce Development Agency, Governor's Office of Business and Economic Development)
- Overview of **Engaged California's** engagement on AI's impact on workers (Government Operations Agency, Office of Data and Innovation)
- Dialogue on opportunities and recommendations (All)

11:05 – 11:30 | Countering Tech-Enabled Fraud

- Overview of ongoing efforts (Business, Consumer Services, and Housing Agency, Department of Financial Protection and Innovation)
- Discussion of opportunities and recommendations (All)

11:30 – 11:55 | Protecting Child Online Safety & Countering Image-Based Abuse

- Overview of ongoing efforts (Office of the First Partner)
- Discussion of opportunities and recommendations (All)

11:55 – 12:00 | Next Steps & Closing