CLIMATE RESILIENCE NEXUS 2024

Outcomes Report

May 3, 2024

PREPARED FOR

Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR)

AUTHORED BY

Chris Rhie (Rhie Planning)

Letter from the Executive Director

California faces many climate risks associated with extreme weather events. Climate impacts such as wildfire, sea-level rise, extreme heat, drought, and extreme precipitation carry significant costs to human lives and livelihoods, including infrastructure damage, insurance costs, and the disruption of critical industries.

California also has the ability to meet this moment and ensure that our communities can thrive in the face of climate change. The Climate Resilience Nexus 2024 symposium was a tremendous opportunity to think long-term about how we position California as a national and international leader in climate resilience while ensuring that our tribes, community-based organizations, and local jurisdictions have what they need to face the climate threats ahead. This report reviews the conversations and knowledge sharing that occurred at this milestone event.

The State of California is committed to partnering with communities to co-develop innovative solutions to climate shocks. At the Governor's Office of Planning and Research, we are dedicated to empowering local governments, community-based organizations, tribes, and residents to create and sustain vital programs and infrastructure that will enable communities to thrive in the face of climate challenges. With tracks on funding, tools and resources, research, and community resilience to extreme heat, this event was a testament to our collective effort to safeguard and enrich the lives of all Californians.

As we move this work forward, let us keep in mind that our work on climate resilience is more than a duty; it's a profound opportunity to shape a sustainable and prosperous future for our beloved state.

Sincerely,

Saharnaz Mirzazad
Executive Director, Governor's Office of Planning and Research

Acknowledgments

The Climate Resilience Nexus would not have been possible without the partnership, creativity, and dedication of Climate Resolve. The Climate Resolve team supported the design of the event and worked to ensure the event had an exceptional group of sponsors. Climate Resolve's dedication to building a community of practice around climate resilience was critical for this event and will continue to be elemental for our state's future efforts.

The Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications, led by Yumi Sera, supported community-based organization attendance and involvement. Yumi and OCPSC ensured that the event went beyond the usual attendees of climate summits and that equity was central to every panel discussion and breakout track.

Several organizations and people were critical to the content creation and facilitation for the event and the afternoon tracks, including ESRI, Nuin-Tara Key, and PRE Collective, led by Shalini Vajjhala.

The ICARP Technical Advisory Council is pivotal in supporting OPR in climate resilience work. We are grateful to all the members who help guide this work and the many members who attended the symposium, including state agencies CNRA, CDPH, OES, CALEPA, and others.

The California Air Resources Board played a critical role in donating use of the Mary D. Nichols Campus. The state-of-the-art green building was a perfect venue for the climate resilience policy discussions at the symposium.

We thank our federal partners, including FEMA and HUD, for attending the event and providing essential guidance. Samatha Medlock and Alexis Pelosi provided vision, guidance, and critical resources to the event.

We are very grateful to the City of Rde for hosting the event and the Mayor of Riverside, Patricia Lock Dawson, for welcoming us to her incredible city.

We want to thank the Eventscape International, Inc. team for their work in delivering a successful event with care, compassion, and efficiency.

We thank Chris Rhie for developing this report and the interviews and analysis he

conducted to produce this report. His expertise and analysis were critical to developing this report's lessons learned and outcomes.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the numerous Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) and organizations whose invaluable support and collaboration made the Climate Resilience Nexus and this report successful! Their dedication and commitment to advancing climate adaptation and resilience programs have been instrumental in addressing California's urgent climate challenges.

We would like to express our sincerest appreciation to the following organizations for their support:

- Los Angeles Department of Water & Power (LADWP)
- City of Riverside
- Inland Regional Energy Network (I-REN)
- Green For All (Dream.org)
- California Resilience Partnership
- PRE Collective
- Resilient Cities Catalyst (RCC)
- PlaceWorks
- San Diego Foundation
- Southern California Edison
- Lawrence Berkeley Lab - Earth & Environmental Sciences
- Ascent
- South Coast AQMD
- Rincon Consultants, Inc
- Sacramento Area Council of Government
- SANDAG
- The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California
- ICLEI - Local Governments for Sustainability
- Community Planning Collaborative
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation
- Clean Power Alliance
- Farallon Strategies
- Sierra Health Foundation
- SCAG
- Resources Legacy Fund
- The James Irvine Foundation
- SDG&E

We are immensely grateful to all the CBOs, organizations, and individuals who contributed their expertise and resources to make this event and report possible. We are paving the way for a more resilient and sustainable future for California and beyond.

Table of Contents

Introduction and Purpose

On Friday, January 12, 2024, the Governor's Office of Planning and Research (OPR), in partnership with Climate Resolve, hosted [Climate Resilience Nexus 2024](#) (CRN 2024), a collaborative event that brought together over 200 people to explore opportunities and create the partnerships necessary to accelerate a Resilient California for all. The event, held at the California Air Resources Board Southern California Headquarters in Riverside, CA, also known as the Mary D. Nichols Campus, and The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture at the Riverside Art Museum (The Cheech), was a testament to the collective commitment towards climate resilience.

This report summarizes the symposium's activities, including key themes from breakout track discussions. It presents an analysis of participant feedback about their resilience priorities and OPR's role in advancing climate resilience in California communities.

Key Takeaways At-A-Glance

Throughout the symposium, participants brought their priorities for climate resilience across California and their input about the best role for OPR to play in addressing these priorities.

<u>Resilience Priorities</u>

Interconnected Social Challenges

Many participants noted that disadvantaged communities face multiple challenges, including lack of affordable housing, language barriers, limited access to technology, job scarcity, and inadequate education. This means that meeting basic needs such as feeding families and paying rent have historically taken precedence over environmental stewardship and climate preparedness.

Disparities in Disaster Relief

Some attendees have been deeply engaged in wildfire and flood disaster relief efforts and noted disparities in accessing disaster relief funds, particularly for events that do not meet the thresholds for federal disaster relief and where there is a low uptake of available SBA loans. They also noted that State funds depend upon non-profit organizations to disseminate funds, many of which are capacity-constrained.

Information Gaps

Participants noted the difficulty or challenge of understanding and utilizing information on climate vulnerability and risk as it applies to their communities. They generally stated that while considerable information and visualization tools are publicly available, they would appreciate practical guidance for communities and their trusted messengers, particularly in capacity-constrained contexts.

Leadership and Workforce Gaps

Participants noted opportunities for cultivating environmental leadership in underserved communities, helping them to build capacity over time. This is about developing climate leaders at various stages of their careers to serve communities throughout the state effectively.

OPR's Role in Climate Resilience

Provide Guidance and Expertise

Practitioners would like OPR to act as an authoritative guide, bringing together individuals with a comprehensive understanding of both the scientific and practical aspects of climate resilience by considering more of a "paint by numbers" implementation guidance for organizations that prefer it, and continuing conversations with high capacity regions and organizations about how best to work with regional collaboratives, MPOs, etc.

Facilitate Cross-Sector Partnerships

Practitioners would like OPR to create the conditions for successful collaboration, channeling energy and mobilizing resources effectively by coordinating with government agencies, engaging with philanthropy to build giving circles and establish funding networks, and replicating collective impact models from other sectors, such as the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications (OCPSC)'s trusted messenger approach.

CBO Capacity Building

Practitioners would like OPR to acknowledge and address the diverse ways that California communities, including immigrant communities, are impacted by climate change by establishing lines of communication with smaller organizations and helping them navigate State government and build power, continuing to provide education on climate change impacts, and providing culturally competent and multilingual content.

Support for Local Governments

Practitioners want OPR to continue supporting local governments, including ICARP and its grant programs. Participants also voiced interest in additional grant opportunities, supporting local governments' relationships with CBOs, and more forums for discussion and knowledge sharing.

Resilience Priorities

Throughout CRN 2024, participants raised a number of their climate resilience priorities that they believe should be centered when developing policies, programs, and investments that help communities prepare to withstand and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Many of these are artfully represented in the Graphic Facilitation images (see Appendix I). While there were a number of community-specific priorities, several overarching themes emerged throughout the day. The following subsections present these thematic priorities.

Interconnected Social Challenges

Many participants noted that disadvantaged communities face multiple social challenges, including lack of affordable housing, language barriers, limited access to technology, job scarcity, and inadequate education. This means that meeting basic needs such as feeding families and paying rent have historically taken precedence over environmental awareness and climate preparedness. Participants also expressed concerns about the immediate and disproportionate impact of climate events on disadvantaged communities. The disproportionate impact is further exacerbated by both short- and long-term climate impacts on the agricultural and logistics sectors, which provide livelihoods within these communities. Some specific priorities that arose include:

- Understanding climate change impacts on an individual level, including extreme heat and its effects on communities working in transportation.
- Consideration of the compounding effects of climate change and economic development models on vulnerable populations.
- Recognition that socioeconomically disadvantaged and underserved communities, particularly those of color, are at the forefront of climate risks.
- Efforts focused on collaborating with academic and government stakeholders to address the social determinants of health in these communities.

"Everything is interconnected. Communities don't have affordable housing, have language barriers, lack access to technology, lack jobs, lack education, lack a support system. When you don't have those basic needs, then you are not aware of what's happening with the environment and how it is affecting you. I need to feed my kids, pay my rent - health and environment are secondary."

Disparities in Disaster Relief Programs

Some participants have been deeply engaged in wildfire and flood disaster relief efforts. They noted disparities in accessing disaster relief funds, particularly for events that do not meet the thresholds for federal disaster relief and where there is a low uptake of available SBA loans. They also noted that State funds depend upon non-profit organizations to disseminate funds, many of which are capacity-constrained.

Interviewees also noted acute challenges for vulnerable populations, such as the inability of undocumented individuals to access federal funds unless they have a child or other family member who is a citizen. They noted language barriers affecting access, particularly for individuals and households with limited English and/or Spanish language proficiency. For these individuals and their advocates, resilience is mainly about access to resources during and after disasters.

"Some of the State funds around flood relief have been helpful, but dependent upon nonprofit organizations to disseminate the funds. Need to prove your identity and undocumented status, and then you are issued a debit card - even those got stuck in the ATM machine. That's why when we say resilience we really mean access."

Information Gaps

Several participants noted the difficulty or challenge of understanding and utilizing information on climate vulnerability and risk as it applies to their communities. They generally stated that while there are considerable information and visualization tools that are publicly available, they would appreciate practical guidance for communities, particularly in capacity-constrained contexts where local government and nonprofit staff do not have time to assess all the available information and develop bespoke approaches towards climate vulnerability assessment and adaptation planning (as may be the case in high capacity contexts).

"A lot of communities and regional organizations want to understand the vulnerabilities and risks to their communities, and they arrive at the state repository and are like, 'What do we do? How do we use this information?' There's a gap between the information and visualization to helping people start the journey and the questions to help the community answer questions of interest."

Leadership and Workforce Gaps

Participants noted opportunities for cultivating environmental leadership in underserved communities, helping them to build capacity over time. This is about developing climate leaders at various stages of their careers to serve communities throughout the state effectively.

"We have perpetual challenges around the capacity to do the work that [the State] wants to do. We have a shared goal to do them and not always the shared resources. It's a workforce issue - both having personnel resources and them having the skill sets to be able to do the work. Seems like we're always funding shovel-ready projects and really needing to support trust building and capacity building work. That's a big challenge... especially for our rural and under-resourced communities."

Resilience Priorities: Key Takeaway

Together, these resilience priorities point to the need for statewide coordination. Climate resilience, as a field of practice, needs to have a broad perspective on social issues that affect vulnerable populations, including housing affordability, workforce development, information access, and access to disaster relief funds. OPR is well-positioned to advise, coordinate, and lead State government initiatives addressing these priority concerns. The following section discusses how OPR can approach multifaceted climate resilience work in partnership with State agencies.

OPR's Role in Climate Resilience

Through a series of one-on-one interviews (see [Appendix II: Data Collection](#)), participants were asked about what role OPR could play in advancing climate resilience efforts for their communities and the state at large. The responses were diverse but broadly pointed to the need and opportunity for coordination between and amongst local communities and State government. The following subsections present this feedback.

Provide Guidance and Expertise

Many interviewees stated that OPR should act as an authoritative guide, bringing together individuals with a comprehensive understanding of both the scientific and practical aspects of climate resilience. This was especially true for practitioners in regional and organizational contexts with limited capacity, for whom climate resilience is one of several issues they focus on. While some participants supported a "paint by numbers" approach, especially for busy practitioners wearing multiple hats, others cautioned that the State should not go as far as telling communities what to do (i.e., respect local control).

> *"I admire OPR's efforts around the Vulnerable Communities Platform, but they don't even have to do the technical and hard stuff, but just providing guidance - being authoritative about it, and having people on their staff that are not just policy professionals and scientists, but people who understand both the science and practice."*

Nearly all interviewees noted that the State needs to recognize and address the diverse needs, capacities, and challenges across regions. The feedback included:

- **Low capacity regions:** Facilitate partnerships and provide templates with actionable guidance (e.g., funding sources, outreach and engagement tools, steering committee composition), and fund proactive work on adaptation and resilience that supports the groups that need it the most.

"Those who are receiving funding are more sophisticated and experienced. There's not an entry point for communities that are currently lacking in the environment and climate space. How do we catch up? If the State were to build [a standardized approach], we would benefit from shared learnings, and we could work alongside and get better together."

- **High-capacity regions:** Improve coordination with regional agencies, regional collaboratives, etc. These entities understand the issues and challenges on the ground and can help disseminate data and information, making it locally relevant.

  "I think every region in the state has different needs and capacities and challenges… We have a lot of high-functioning regional agencies that could get information out to local governments, and it feels like state and regional agencies can be competing over communicating who is doing what. We need to be symbiotic, figuring out how state agencies provide high-level guidance and resources, how those are being interpreted, and how resources flow to help everybody reach the same level of safety."

- **Tribal communities:** Build capacity to participate in research and climate solutions, while being mindful not to overwhelm tribes with requests for time and resources.

  "We're building bridges and crossing cultural boundaries to share tribal knowledge with the world and it's exhausting, but I'm hopeful [for effective research collaboration] by bringing in the youth and tribes taking more agency. That's what effective allyship looks like to me."

Facilitate Cross-Sector Partnerships

The feedback emphasized the need for OPR to facilitate regional and statewide partnerships. Participants wanted to see OPR create the conditions for successful collaboration so that local and regional actors could channel their energy, share information, and mobilize resources effectively - avoiding intraregional competition that can be counterproductive. Participants pointed to successful collective impact models from other sectors, such as OCPSC's approach to Census enumeration, as demonstrative of how the State can support communities that lack experience and sophistication in the environmental and climate space. Another aspect is engaging with philanthropy to build

giving circles and establish funding networks. Communities can collectively benefit by building regional partnerships, sharing learnings, and avoiding competition.

> *"A lot of problems are created when we try to find 'the' solution, and the OPR approach is really talking to all stakeholders and speaking all languages, and building a shared vision within all these different community members. Through all of this, real, lasting change happens. It's really quite remarkable."*

Participants also described their experiences with inconsistencies in State grant programs. They saw a role for OPR in helping to align the timing, application requirements, and reporting requirements of grant programs amongst State agencies. This could reduce applicants' pain points. By filling this need for interagency coordination, OPR can enable more communities to access grant programs without stretching their personnel resources unnecessarily.

> *"I don't know how much OPR has point people at each agency, if they're regularly meeting and trying to align grant programs, and how they're working out the expectations and timelines for each grant program - trying to make sense of it all. It's hard to do but that's kind of how I see their role."*

CBO Capacity Building:
OPR should ensure that the State's climate resilience efforts acknowledge and address the diverse ways California communities, including immigrant communities, are impacted. This involves establishing lines of communication with and supporting smaller organizations, particularly regarding navigating State government and connecting with decision-makers (e.g., electeds).

Building capacity will also require ongoing work to raise awareness and provide education on the impacts of climate change, particularly among communities that may not prioritize it due to immediate social concerns. Providing culturally competent and multilingual content (beyond English and Spanish) will improve community understanding.

"[CRN] was one of the first opportunities where the State created a forum for both the EJ and climate science folks to talk with other CBOs in the power-building world. I've never been in a place that's tried to bridge multiple conversations in one place... There are places where climate science and EJ orgs can be at loggerheads, and times when they can have synergies. There was an attempt to bring other stakeholders into the conversation, and that was truly unique."

Support for Local Governments

Interviewees were keen to see continued support for local governments, including ICARP and its grant programs. They also appreciated OPR's role as a convener for the CRN event. They voiced a desire to see more forums for discussion and knowledge sharing, potentially occurring as regional events between statewide gatherings. Participants would also like to see OPR coordinating with government agencies, particularly to bridge the gap between legislative mandates from different agencies and promoting a more unified message from the State. This support is crucial for local governments to effectively understand and address resilience issues.

"OPR is the one State agency that isn't single-mission driven. [Other State agencies], a lot of times, they have siloed policies that conflict. OPR could acknowledge these conflicts and have a reconciliation board."

OPR's Role in Climate Resilience: Key Takeaway

OPR is uniquely positioned to help advance equitable climate resilience in California. It can further the state of practice by providing authoritative guidance, facilitating partnerships between and within sectors, supporting local governments, and helping build capacity for regions, tribes, and CBOs. This will result in improved communication, more cooperation and knowledge sharing, and ultimately, more resilient communities and regions. OPR staff are considering how to further operationalize these aspects of its role in its forthcoming strategic plan.

Event Overview

The event had two major parts: a morning plenary session, with all attendees gathered in the auditorium to listen to speakers, and afternoon breakout sessions, where participants attended one of four tracks. Participants also mingled during pre-event breakfast, a lunch break, and the evening reception at The Cheech.

IMAGE: Participants gather in the communal spaces at the Mary D. Nichols Campus.

Morning Plenary Session

Following event check-in and networking over coffee and continental breakfast, participants gathered in the auditorium for the morning plenary session. Speakers included current and former officials from state, local, federal, and tribal government, a Councilmember from the North Fork Mono Tribe, and key leaders from the nonprofit sector. The plenary also included a video, "Voices on Extreme Heat," and concluded with a

spoken word performance by youth poet Jacob Virges, who delivered a poem on climate resilience.

IMAGE: The morning plenary brought the entire CRN 2024 audience together for speakers, with conversations represented by graphic facilitation and punctuated by spoken word performance.

The morning plenary schedule and speakers are listed below for reference:

- 9:00 - 9:25 am Welcome to the Climate Resilience Nexus Event
    - Sam Assefa, Director, OPR
    - Saharnaz Mirzazad, Executive Director of State Policy and Planning, OPR
    - Yumi Sera, Executive Director, OCPSC
    - Mayor Patricia Lock Dawson, City of Riverside
- 9:25 - 9:55 am Featured Speaker
    - Alexis M. Pelosi, Senior Advisor for Climate, HUD
- 9:55 - 10:55 am Fireside Chat: California & Beyond: Charting the Future of Climate Resilience
    - Saharnaz Mirzazad (Moderator)

- - Danielle Airgoni, Director, National Housing Trust
  - Marina Gorbis, Executive Director, Institute for the Future
  - Councilmember Jesse Valdez, North Fork Mono Tribe
- 11:10 - 11:15 am Video - Voices on Extreme Heat
- 11:15 - 11:45 am Keynote
  - Samantha A. Medlock, Assistant Administrator, FEMA Office of Resilience Strategy
- 11:45 - 11:50 am Overview of Tracks
- 11:50 am - 12 pm Spoken Word Poet
  - Jacob Virges, Youth Poet, Urban Strategies Council

Afternoon Breakout Tracks and Closing Remarks

After a lunch break in the courtyard, participants selected one of four breakout tracks corresponding with the strategic plan for State Planning and Policy Development (SPPD) within OPR. The three-hour sessions provided deeper dives into each of OPR's focus areas. Following these discussions, attendees reconvened in the auditorium to report observations from each breakout session. The formal event concluded with closing remarks from Jonathan Parfrey, Executive Director of Climate Resolve. The following section describes Each breakout track in further detail (see Breakout Tracks).

IMAGE: The afternoon breakout tracks brought participants together for interactive discussions, followed by report-backs and concluding remarks.

Reception at the Cheech Museum

The post-event reception took place from 5:30 to 8:00 p.m. at The Cheech Marin Center for Chicano Art & Culture at the Riverside Art Museum (The Cheech) in Downtown Riverside. Participants were greeted with a live musical performance and remarks from Saharnaz Mirzazad (OPR), Nuin-Tara Key (Senior Advisor at Resilient Cities Catalyst), and Bernadette Austin (Executive Director at CivicWell).

IMAGE: The evening reception concluded CRN 2024 on a celebratory note with a musical performance and informal conversation.

Breakout Tracks

The tracks at the CRN reflect OPR's strategic approach to promoting climate resilience and how program development at OPR can respond to these challenges. This strategic approach includes operating in a framework that promotes innovative and adaptive responses to emergent issues or priorities.

The **extreme heat and community resilience track** and the **financing resilience track** are examples of this framework in action, as they address the emergent issues related to the challenge of building resilience around extreme heat in California, and the challenge of navigating the complex funding environment to develop projects and programs framed around building resilience and investing in adaptation. The **research track** and **tools and resources track** reflect programs cultivated in this same innovation framework, but have coalesced around key priorities to shape their ongoing development. These priorities include a focus on community and tribal input during development phases, ensuring outputs are relevant and applicable across a range of users and organizations in California, and emphasizing equity at every step in the process.

The breakout tracks were separate at the CRN, but OPR staff are developing a strategic plan that connects these approaches to innovation and growth with existing programs and efforts around climate resilience. The result will be a holistic plan that builds on the planning and policy foundation at OPR, leverages the tools, resources, and research that support ongoing innovation, and aligns with emergent opportunities to support new initiatives and adaptation investments to promote equity-centered climate resilience statewide.

Track 1. Extreme Heat and Community Resilience

Track Overview
This track focused on addressing California's urgent climate challenge of extreme heat. It highlighted existing efforts by community-based organizations and the Heat Ready CA initiative led by the Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications. The discussions will also shape the development of the new Extreme Heat and Community

Resilience Program at OPR. More than 60 people attended the session, which had three parts:

- Impacts of Extreme Heat
- Extreme Heat Messaging: What works and what should we do next?
- Resilience to Extreme Heat in Action: Reshaping infrastructure and programs to improve resilience

IMAGE: More than 60 people attended the Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Track, which highlighted community-based initiatives.

Key Themes

- **Lessons from the Pandemic:** Extreme heat plans and community resilience are improving with lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic. The workshop highlighted expanded opportunities for community-based organizations to conduct outreach and programs addressing extreme heat challenges.

  "Everybody has to work together. One of the things we also learned during COVID, and we are now applying with extreme heat, is that you can't do anything without the community being involved in creating the program you're talking about. I heard somebody say nothing about us without us."

- **Interconnected Crises and Solutions:** The workshop highlighted the interconnected nature of crises, including health, race, labor, housing, economics, and climate. Participants emphasized collaborative efforts, community involvement, and customized toolkits for effective response and resilience. Holistic

approaches, as demonstrated by TODEC Legal Services in supporting migrant farmworkers, were deemed crucial.

"This is a phrase we hear repeated during disasters: If I don't work, my family does not eat. With immigrants, when disaster happens, they're not thinking of prevention. They're thinking of survival."

- **Trusted Messengers:** The role of trusted messengers, such as community-based organizations and Native artists, in providing culturally and linguistically relevant messaging was discussed. Participants emphasized tailored messages for specific tribal communities, utilizing mediums such as children's and coloring books. Participants also stressed the importance of community trust and collaboration with existing networks within health and faith-based sectors.

- **Community Involvement and Feedback:** The importance of maintaining feedback loops with community members to ensure effective and equitable programs was a recurring theme. Examples, such as the Cool Pavement Initiative by Pacoima Beautiful and the Heat and Air Quality Resilience Project (HAQR) by the City and County of San Francisco, illustrated the need for community involvement in planning and implementation.

- **Community Resilience Initiatives:** Participants identified diverse initiatives tailored to geography and community needs, such as urban greenery projects, broadband expansion, and accessibility considerations for vulnerable populations. Presenters discussed the new Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Grant program as an opportunity to support investments in heat relief and resilience to extreme heat.

> **Key Takeaways: Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Track**
> Extreme heat is killing Californians and threatens our economy and ways of life. California must build upon recent efforts and organizing to improve preparedness and awareness through the Heat Ready CA initiative and innovations from pilot projects led by Climate Resolve, Pacoima Beautiful, California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc., Leadership Council for Justice and Accountability, and others.

OPR's Extreme Heat and Community Resilience Grant Program will provide an opportunity to fund more planning and implementation that can save lives in the coming summers and prepare communities for longer-term resilience to extreme heat.

The Office of Community Partnerships and Strategic Communications plays a critical leadership role in ensuring all state agencies working on resilience to extreme heat programs center the most vulnerable Californians, including tribes, BIPOC communities, the access and functional needs communities, pregnant people, students, and older adults.

Track 2: Research

Track Overview

The research track focused on OPR's climate adaptation and resilience programs, showcasing innovative research approaches and connections to policy and programmatic advances. It also showcased ongoing Fifth Assessment research, including the Tribal Research Program and SGC's participatory research to policy model. The session demonstrated OPR's historical support for State climate action and its alignment with other programs, State processes, and community needs. Three different panel discussions took place in the session:

- From Risk to Resilience: Advancing California's Resilience through Innovative Climate Change Research
- Tribally-Led Research
- Climate Change Research: Participatory Research to Policy

IMAGE: The Research Track featured three panel discussions (two shown above), focusing on different aspects of OPR's research efforts.

Key Themes

- **Interagency Coordination:** There was a strong emphasis on early coordination and engagement among State agencies. The Fifth Assessment, mandated by statute (SB 1320, Stern, 2020), aims to provide original research and data products with California-specific climate change projections to identify key risks and vulnerabilities and inform future actions that prepare the state for the challenges of climate change. The State will release a suite of completed products in mid-2026. Panelists acknowledged opportunities to improve and foster alignment across current models and tools. They also highlighted that real-time responses to extreme events like Hurricane Hilary are guided by the best available science.

- **Tribally-Led Research:** Panelists introduced a first-of-its-kind Tribal Research Program, focusing on partnerships and funding tribally-led initiatives that uplift indigenous knowledge and model a shift toward a more inclusive way of conducting community-led research. The program recognizes that denying tribal involvement hampers the development of future solutions and advocates for a collaborative approach. The power of tribal research, rooted in holistic understanding and the tribal perspective of cyclical time, was essential for finding effective solutions to climate-related challenges.

- **Collaboration and Integration:** Regional and local integration of climate assessments emerged as a key theme, ensuring a shared foundation for planning

and promoting collaboration. Efforts are underway to include community perspectives throughout the scoping and research processes, particularly in tribal research, through strategic partnerships and funding for tribally led initiatives. The State is also emphasizing community-driven processes to develop the Regional Synthesis Reports, so that they respond to local needs. Panelists also discussed challenges, including the need for more regional collaboration among tribal communities, capacity constraints, and funding disparities in grassroots initiatives. The discussions emphasized the ongoing commitment required from the public sector to sustain these collaborative efforts.

"Work is needed to make the assessment relevant and actionable to communities. The technical work needs to be downscaled and translated so that it makes sense to people at the block and community scale so that people can understand potential tradeoffs in different types of projects and investments."

- **Prioritizing Equity and Trust-Building:** A commitment to equity is integral to the success of these endeavors. Panelists discussed participatory research approaches in the context of advancing from research products to comprehensive research programs where a community-driven process is integral to the design, implementation and use of new research. The importance of community engagement, building relationships and trust, and recognizing the transformative potential of research in shifting power dynamics were recurrent themes. "Soft" infrastructure, such as relationship-building, trust, and capacity development, was recognized as equally important as "hard" infrastructure.

Key Takeaways: Research Track

Climate research as we know it is evolving. California's Fifth Climate Change Assessment models a new approach to research by bringing together diverse perspectives, expertise, and lived experience to thoroughly evaluate the impacts of climate change in ways that support meaningful adaptation responses at a community level. Through strategic partnerships across disciplines and geographies and prioritizing an equity-centered approach, the Assessment will deliver products that guide future actions toward a more resilient future for all.

Track 3. Financing Resilience

Track Overview

In partnership with [PRE Collective](#), this track explored funding strategies for climate resilience and taught participants how to identify and combine funding options. The agenda offered real-world case studies, interactive activities, and recommendations for ambitious next steps, focusing on community engagement, equity, and efficient resource allocation for impactful projects. The session had three parts:
- Funding and Financing 101 Lightning Presentations
- Interactive Workshop on Federal Funding
- The Future of Funding and Financing for Climate Resilience Panel

IMAGE: Participants interact in the Financing Resilience Track, which included case studies and hypothetical scenarios.

Key Themes
- **Community-Driven Approaches in Grantmaking and Financing:** A key theme involves the shift towards projects that are deeply rooted in community engagement and power, as evidenced by the prioritization of community-driven projects in grantmaking, such as the US EPA Community Change Grant and impact financing models like those employed by Mission Driven Finance. This emphasizes the need for funding mechanisms that align with investors' social impact goals to empower communities and ensure equitable outcomes.

- **Evolving Role of Insurance and Financial Instruments:** The discussion on utilizing insurance as a strategic risk management tool and adopting green bonds for sustainability projects highlighted the evolving financial landscape. These mechanisms, from community-based insurance programs to green bonds, showcase the potential for innovative financial instruments to support resilience and sustainability while communicating impact and facilitating collaboration.

- **Strategic Funding Utilization:** The importance of strategically leveraging various funding sources, including grants, loans, and private financing, based on project needs and stages, underpins the need for thoughtful planning in resilience efforts. Grants can be helpful for developing plans, making projects appealing to financers, and showcasing community commitment, while more communities can utilize flexible funding sources at later stages. To build resilience, communities need sustainable, long-term funding and financing opportunities to operationalize climate adaptation and mitigation planning grants.

- **Building Effective Partnerships and Centering Community Needs:** Panelists emphasized the necessity of forming respectful and meaningful partnerships, especially with tribes, and the critical role of intermediary organizations in navigating complex projects. Discussions emphasized the value of collaboration and the importance of beginning with a clear understanding of community needs and beneficiaries to guide project development and ensure that resilience efforts are impactful and relevant. This accompanies a broader shift towards participatory decision-making with shared decision-making in allocating and utilizing funds.

- **Long-Term Vision for Structural Change and Community Resilience:** The discussion highlighted the need for a shift from immediate solutions to strategic, long-term approaches aimed at structural change. By addressing foundational issues and employing a holistic view, which includes employment opportunities and economic development within climate resilience planning, communities can work towards enduring climate resilience solutions.

> **Key Takeaways: Financing Resilience Track**
>
> This discussion stressed the importance of aligning funding strategies with what communities actually need rather than just going after whatever money is available. The key is to determine exactly what your community needs and find the right funding sources. Aiming high while still staying grounded in addressing real community issues is essential. The conversation also highlighted the crucial role of partnerships, emphasizing the need for authentic collaborations and involving the community in decisions about where funds go.
>
> There was encouragement for a long-term vision that includes climate resilience and economic development. Overall, the focus is on making intelligent decisions, strategically using funds, and tackling the problems communities face. OPR grant programs support these goals.

Track 4. Tools and Resources

Track Overview

This track highlighted resilience tools, asking participants to help shape their development and enhance the support offered by OPR. This session covered updates on tools like Cal-Adapt and the Vulnerable Communities Platform (VCP), with opportunities for input, interactive demos, Q&As, and networking. The session had three parts:

- Vulnerable Communities Platform Overview & Input
- VCP Demo, Feedback & Q&A
- Technical Assistance for Climate Tools & Data

IMAGE: Participants listened intently in the Tools and Resources Track, where presenters went over the Vulnerable Communities Platform for feedback.

Key Themes

- **User-Centric Design:** Tool development must be responsive to user needs, informed by organizations that can provide iterative feedback. The VCP can be enhanced by creating a mobile-friendly interface, offering climate projection timeframe options (e.g., 2030, 2050, 2070), developing a technical assistance framework that supports users, and providing a specialized view for tribes.

- **Alignment and Data Enhancement:** Tools and resources should be aligned with agencies working on similar efforts, including strategic direction and prioritized data. Attendees appreciated the opportunity for cross-platform comparisons that highlight different use cases for these resources. Attendees also suggested expanding the data to include various demographic and environmental factors such as unhoused populations, outdoor workers, education levels, pesticide drift, and shade equity.

- **Tool Functionality and Accessibility:** Attendees confirmed the value of having a flexible approach to characterizing vulnerability, including the ability to tweak visualizations based on the research interest. Suggestions to improve the functionality included integrating resources directly into the hazard and sensitivity app, offering project impact tracking for municipalities, streamlining access to resources through resource springboards that connect to other State or federal adaptation resources, and cross-border data integration.

- **Direct Community Engagement:** Participants were happy that the VCP is iterative and open to ongoing input. The VCP's Local Impacts case study viewer is an example of combining experiential knowledge with data and integrating that into an inclusive and participatory public process involving climate vulnerability mapping. Participants also proposed a "train the trainer" approach that builds the capacity to use, apply, and teach the VCP.

"The Vulnerable Communities Platform (VCP) + Climate Hazard Map is a great tool for our nonprofit partners. Looking at health conditions like asthma and diabetes and overlapping it with poor air quality is key for our partners to be aware of this resource. In terms of the map, my biggest takeaway is that they needed community input on some of the indicators (look at the definition of outdoor workers)."

Key Takeaways: Tools and Resources Track

The landscape around climate tools and adaptation resources is shifting, and development strategies must respond to evolving needs and emergent gaps. Climate Services (Tools and Resources) development at OPR includes a close consideration of social vulnerability in addition to climate hazards, and in particular, the regional perspectives and impacts that vary across a state as large and diverse as California, along with an understanding of how community history and lived experience affect and shape adaptation outcomes.

The OPR Climate Services team is focused on building capacity and technical assistance around these tools and resources to emphasize action beyond simply better characterization of climate vulnerability, instead focusing on how they can shape priorities for climate action and investments that support community adaptation.

Conclusion

The Climate Resilience Nexus was an essential milestone in the evolution of OPR's climate resilience work. We are committed to working on the many issues addressed at the summit and continuing the dialogue with interested and affected parties. We look forward to communicating OPR's strategic plans in the coming months with our partners and continuing the conversation on how we can best support their climate resilience work.

The current moment presents California with issues that we must address wholeheartedly, including interconnected social challenges, disparities in disaster relief, information gaps that slow down problem-solving, and climate leadership and resilience workforce gaps. The Governor's Office of Planning and Research fulfills several critical roles in supporting California's climate resilience efforts. These roles include providing guidance and expertise, facilitating cross-sector partnerships, conducting capacity building with community-based organizations, and supporting local governments with

planning, funding, and implementation. OPR is also committed to continuous learning; as this report details, the organization is documenting lessons learned to further its climate resilience impact.

Ways to Stay in Touch

There are several ways to continue the climate resilience work with OPR, and we highly encourage professionals, organizations, and residents to keep in touch.

Technical Advisory Council

Please stay in touch with OPR and SPPD staff so we can help meet your climate resilience needs. The ICARP Technical Advisory Council is a great way to stay aware of our efforts and keep in dialogue with our staff; signing up for ICARP email updates is an effective way to keep up to date on ICARP programs and related resources from OPR, State agencies, Federal agencies, and other partners.

Fifth Assessment

Looking ahead, the Assessment will foster partnerships with academic, tribal, community, local government, and private sector teams to produce a suite of new research on the impacts of climate change. Opportunities to support the development of Regional and Statewide Topical Synthesis Reports will continue through the Assessment roll-out in mid-2026. Sign up for the CA Climate Assessment email list to stay in the loop on updates and opportunities to contribute: Signup Form (constantcontactpages.com).

Adaptation Planning Grant Program's (APGP) Sustainable Funding & Financing Core Component

Recognizing the importance of sustainable funding models, as discussed in the Funding and Finance track, APGP Round 2 encourages applicants to integrate financing solutions into climate adaptation planning to enable communities to implement innovative solutions that address the ongoing and evolving challenges posed by climate change. By strategically linking climate adaptation planning with Federal grants or longer-term financing solutions, communities can access essential financial resources to sustain their resilience efforts. Sign up here to stay up to date on OPR Grant Programs: Governor's Office of Planning and Research: Sign Up to Stay in Touch (constantcontact.com).

Appendix I: Graphic Facilitation
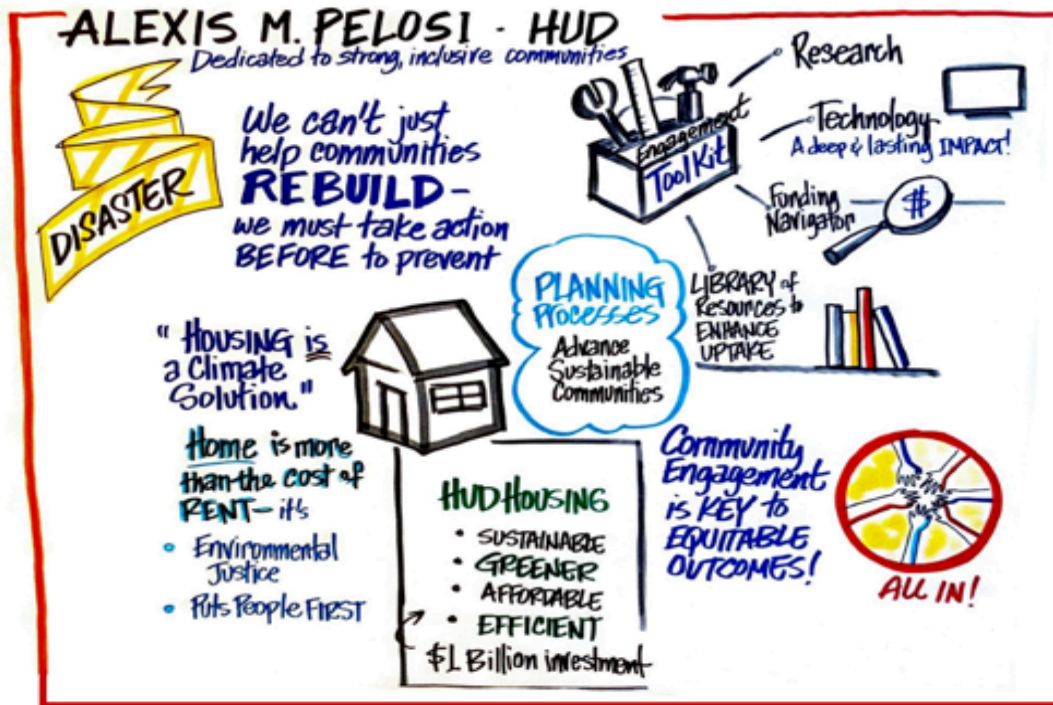
Morning Session

CLIMATE RESILIENCE NEXUS 2024

DANIELLE ARIGONI
AGING
An AARP Perspective

'The GAP' — AND CLIMATE CHANGE

* Older Adults DIE more often in DISASTERS

Extreme Heat — Biggest threat over 80% → Older Adults!

Higher Expenses for Older Adults ON THE EDGE

Acknowledge that Climate impacts Older adults — Climate Resilience plans need to CENTER older adults — will benefit EVERYONE else

Approach Housing & Transportation DIFFERENTLY

Need 'old school' communication

FIRESIDE CHAT

MARINA GORBIS
"Nobody can PREDICT the FUTURE"

WORK All of us will be in climate work
Result of many factors - policy,

GOOD JOBS?
- PAY WELL
- BENEFITS
- WEALTH CREATION
- HOUSING

CO-OPS
- PUBLIC
- Disaster Recovery

JESSE VALDEZ

We can't have CLIMATE resilience without CULTURAL resilience.

Cultural Burning

It takes thousands of sticks to make ONE Basket

"It's different when you're LIVING on the land."

Bring your children to the FOREST! That's where the MAGIC happens

GIANT SEQUOIAS example

Taking the Nutrients

50'

Q & A

○ EDUCATION & TRAINING to improve ACCESS?
Some are THERE, but need to improve AWARENESS

○ ROLE of Entrepreneurship?
TRUST — History with Fed Gov't a challenge. Most tribes don't have gaming

○ How do you see climate jobs evolving?
— Automation — Going into dangerous areas symbiosis of people & machines
— AI
— Rediscovering Native Knowledge

CLIMATE RESILIENCE NEXUS 2024

SAMANTHA A. MEDLOCK - FEMA OFFICE of RESILIENCE

The urgency to act...
in a Spoken Word prayer
overheard in the hall...

Move Beyond the 100 YEAR Standard

FEMA Approach to RESILIENCE ...

- Helping people before, during & after DISASTER
- Develop National Resilience Guidance

2023 Hottest on record

California: → **DATA**
Most populated, Varied & volatile

Actions:
Extreme heat response plan
Threat Assessment

CLIMATE HAZARD & MAPPING TOOLS

Community Disaster Resilence ZONES: Prioritize RESOURCES by greatest NEED

What does it mean?
- 90% Cost share
- Providing additional application points (other Agencies involved)

"It's a MOVEMENT...
a campaign."
— Local Partners - non-governmental

JACOB VIRGES
Spoken Word Artist

Shooting Stars

LOVE is the Supreme Leader!

The TEMPERATURES are RISING!

Dividing lack of unified

"Still Pimping Out Mother Earth"

Whispers of Children

SOOT-Covered HANDS

Filthy, Violent, Disgusting **LIES...**
Cool this WORLD Down...

② **Extreme Heat** & *Community Resilience*

HeatReadyCA.com

MESSAGING: What Works? — Mario Ortega, Naindeep Singh, Caelum Cayron
Moderator: Yumi Sera
CEO, Abrazar Inc.   Exec. Director, Jakara Movement   Rapid Response Coordinator, California Indian Manpower Consortium, Inc.

What community do you serve?
How do they experience Extreme Heat?

Naindeep — Focus Group: San Joaquin Valley
  Messages Need to be Geographically & Culturally Relevant

Mario — Highly DIVERSE in Orange County — Over 1 MILLION qualify for MediCal
  The Athena App challenge... tech barriers, language only English
  "We kicked down the door..." show us the back-end of the APP
  55,000 VACCINATIONS from taking charge & serving the community

Caelum — Consortium of tribal communities — every situation is different
  No A/C, transportation, lack of awareness, remote locations

1. Do Good Medicine booklet
2. Coloring Book

We are NOT a Monolith!
Each tribe is unique

- QUALITY of CONNECTION! Coming BACK vs. Just Numbers

- African American Churches How to Communicate:
  - Talking Points
  - Health Equity Collaborative
  - Vaccinated 90%

  School Districts
  → Asset Educators
  → Multiple Language Info

- Planting TREES

- PROMOTORES → IN the Community

- WE are the Command Center!

- Indigenous Micro populations: TRANSLATE info. to local languages

- "Power Your Savings" Program - older adults AARP

- Raising Salmon in OUR LOBBY!

37

Appendix II: Data Collection

Data Collection Methods

Event Notes

Each workshop track had one or more dedicated note-takers who took live notes and provided an analysis of key ideas and concepts that emerged from the discussion.

Post-Event Survey

Participants engaged in the post-event survey following the inaugural Climate Resilience Nexus event in Riverside. Administered by Rhie Planning, the survey gathered feedback anonymously and confidentially, with results reported in aggregated and non-attributable form (see Appendix III). The survey consisted of 37 questions, encompassing multiple-choice and short-answer formats. The questions prompted participants to reflect on their event experience and provide insights on how OPR could effectively support climate resilience and adaptation planning at the community level.
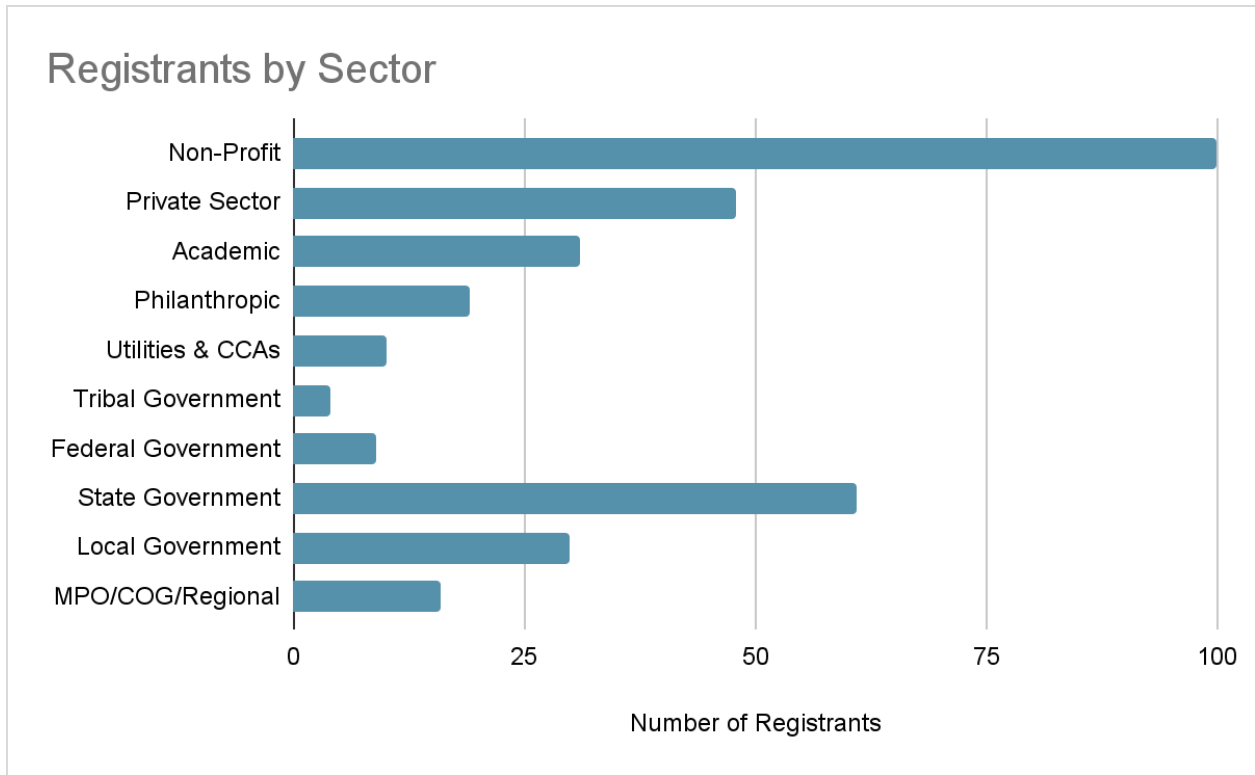
One-on-one Interviews

To supplement the post-event survey, Rhie Planning conducted one-on-one interviews with nine volunteers (who indicated their interest in the post-event survey) and ten key informants identified by OPR. The virtual interviews, conducted between February 14 and March 12, provided diverse and detailed insights into OPR's support for community-scale climate resilience initiatives. Rhie Planning, an external consultant, ensured the confidentiality of responses by conducting the interviews and reporting findings in an aggregated and non-attributable form. They conducted 16 interviews with 19 subjects (two interviews included multiple subjects).
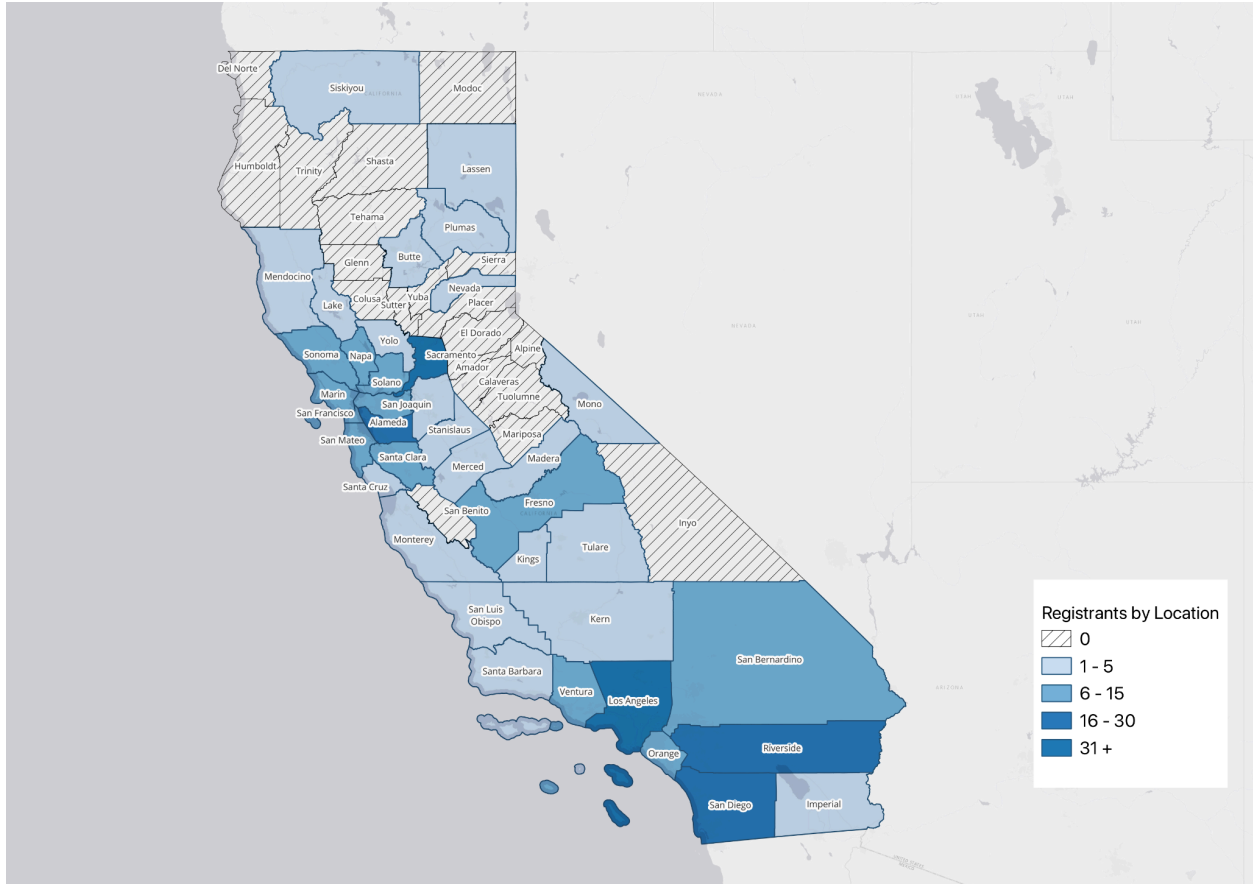
Registration Data

Three hundred twenty-eight people registered online for the event from various sectors, including 100 from the non-profit sector and 120 from governmental or

quasi-governmental agencies. The chart below provides a breakdown of registrants'
primary sectors[1]:

Registrants by Sector

Registrants hailed from throughout the State, with notable concentrations of individuals
from Sacramento County (71 registrants) as well as the State's population centers of Los
Angeles (76) and the San Francisco Bay Area (41). Southern California also saw significant
registration numbers from Riverside (30), San Diego (19), Orange (10), San Bernardino (8),
and Ventura (6) Counties. From the Central Valley, nine registrants hailed from Fresno,
with four apiece from Madera and Merced Counties. At least 14 people who registered
are from outside of California. The map below presents the count of registrants by region:
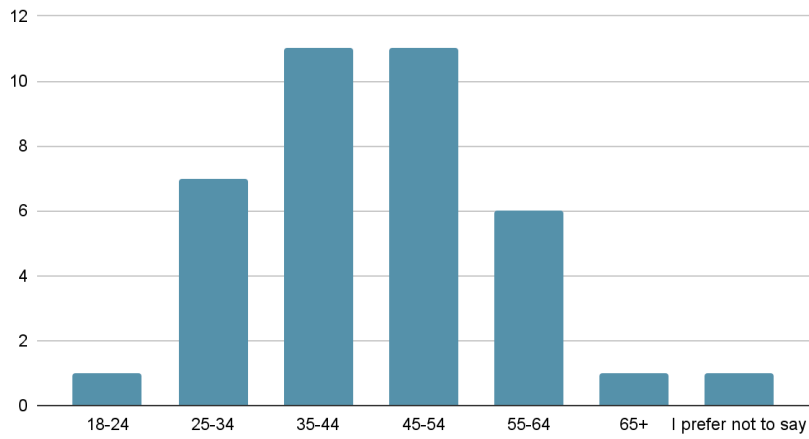
[1] Registrants were not asked to provide their sector; these are approximated based on listed affiliations.

Registrants by Location

- 0
- 1 - 5
- 6 - 15
- 16 - 30
- 31 +

Survey Demographics

While CRN organizers did not collect demographic data at the time of registration, the post-event survey asked a series of optional demographic questions, which 38 of 40 respondents answered. While the survey is a non-statistical sample, the responses are consistent with visual observations of the CRN 2024 audience, primarily working-age adults. The survey results also indicate that a majority of respondents identify as female. 45% of respondents identified themselves as white, 21% as Hispanic or Latino/a/e/x, and 18% as Asian. The charts below present the results of the age, gender identity, and racial and ethnic identity questions.

What is your age?

Which of the following racial and ethnic groups best describes you? Select all that apply.