

Thoughtworks Global CIO Survey 2026: Who governs enterprise AI?

North America: Different routes to AI coordination in the US and Canada

Executive summary

The US and Canada insights do not fall into a single North American narrative.

While US CIOs report very high confidence in their preparedness and a strong emphasis on formal governance, Canadian respondents are more likely to describe budget structures as still evolving - and less likely to say the CIO role is being expanded to oversee enterprise-wide AI strategy.

United States

83% of US CIOs say their organization is very prepared to govern AI consistently across business functions, compared with 53% globally. At the same time, 92% agree adoption is happening faster than governance can adapt.

65% say their organization is establishing a formal AI governance and operating model, the highest figure among the markets surveyed.

94% agree the CIO is now more responsible for redesigning workforce workflows and labor models than for managing core IT infrastructure, while 94% agree central IT would still ultimately be held responsible for security or compliance failures caused by independently purchased AI tools.

The CEO is the most frequently cited source of greatest influence over AI decisions at 38%, followed by central IT at 26%.

Canada

Central IT is the most frequently cited source of greatest influence over AI decisions at 26%. Only 9% cite the CEO, well below the global figure of 23%.

28% say AI decision-making and budget structures are still evolving, compared with 17% globally.

49% describe their organization as very prepared and another 49% as somewhat prepared.

53% are embedding a dedicated technology lead in each business unit, while 39% are expanding the CIO role to oversee enterprise-wide AI strategy and implementation.

What this suggests

The US findings show a strong emphasis on formal governance, alongside very high confidence and an expanding CIO remit.

Canada shows a less settled picture, with a larger share of respondents suggesting structures and leadership arrangements are still evolving.