First Nations Technology Council

Enabling First Nations In BC to Safely Adopt Artificial Intelligence (AI)

February 2026

AI adoption across First Nations Band Councils and economic development corporations remains early and uneven. While there is strong interest in AI adoption to reduce administrative workloads and support community priorities, concerns about privacy, data sovereignty, and the cultural safety and relevance of AI systems persist.

In Spring and Summer 2025, the First Nations Technology Council conducted research exploring how First Nations Band Councils and economic development corporations in BC engage with AI. The findings highlight AI's potential uses and the opportunities and barriers shaping AI adoption.[1] This project is part of a broader commitment to support AI adoption, ensuring that communities define their own pathways and priorities.

> *We would like to thank all those who participated in this engagement by sharing their insights and experiences through our online survey and one-on-one interviews.*

Key Insights

Adoption and Use

AI adoption is early and uneven. Many organizations are not yet using AI or are only beginning to explore it. It's more common for individuals to use AI in their jobs than coordinated organization-wide adoption.

16%
of **organizations** had **adopted AI tools** either fully or partially

35%
of **individuals** had **adopted AI tools** either fully or partially

AI's Potential

Hopes and aspirations for future AI applications mostly center around:

Day-to-day tasks	Community priorities
Writing, editing, summarizing	Knowledge management and translation
Data analysis	Income and funding generation
Simplifying processes	Communicating and engaging the community
Scheduling and project management	Language preservation

Overall, AI was seen as a way to reduce heavy workloads in small offices, particularly in administrative and operational tasks.
The goal was to free up time for staff to focus on relational and community-facing work.
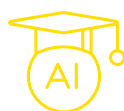
Training and Education

Just 5% of participants reported accessing formal AI training. Interest in training is high, particularly if it is:

- **Accessible**
- **Flexible**
- **Practical**
- **Role-aligned**
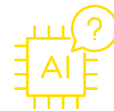- **Grounded in Indigenous governance and data sovereignty**

Barriers to Adoption

The most prominent reasons AI use is currently not widespread are:

67%
Lack of training

50%
Limited awareness of practical uses

52%
Privacy and security concerns

30%
Ethical and data concerns

Data sovereignty concerns were frequently mentioned as a barrier to adoption.

Final Reflections

We heard balanced optimism about AI's potential with caution about its risks. Participants emphasized the importance of Indigenous-governed, community-specific approaches grounded in OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) principles.

If we're going to use AI, we should make sure it's done in a way that supports our community's values and priorities, not just because it's new or trendy."

— Interview participant

Learn more
technologycouncil.ca

f ⓘ in

First Nations Technology Council