

Panelist Bios



Clarissa Laguardia, Executive Director
California Center for Civic Participation

Clarissa Laguardia is an immigrant, advocate, and movement-builder dedicated to uplifting youth voices in civic life. As Executive Director of the California Center for Civic Participation, she has led the expansion of programs that connect young people to leadership, policy, and creative expression. With over 15 years of experience in organizing and language access advocacy, she brings both strategy and heart to her work. Outside of her role, Clarissa is a proud dog lover and cafecito enthusiast who finds joy in building community wherever she goes.



Ivette Chaidez Villarreal
Civic Engagement Program Director, Valley Voices

Ivette Chaidez Villarreal (she/her) is the Civic Engagement Program Director at Valley Voices, where she leads efforts to strengthen democracy and empower immigrant, Latino, and low-wage worker communities in California's Central Valley. At Valley Voices, she designs and implements innovative programs that make civic participation accessible, from voter registration and education to citizenship workshops and youth leadership development. Ivette also manages the organization's social media strategy, using creative digital storytelling to connect thousands of residents with vital information on workers' rights, public health, and local elections. A proud immigrant and daughter of farmworkers, Ivette brings both lived experience and deep community ties to her work, ensuring that the voices of historically excluded communities are heard, valued, and represented.