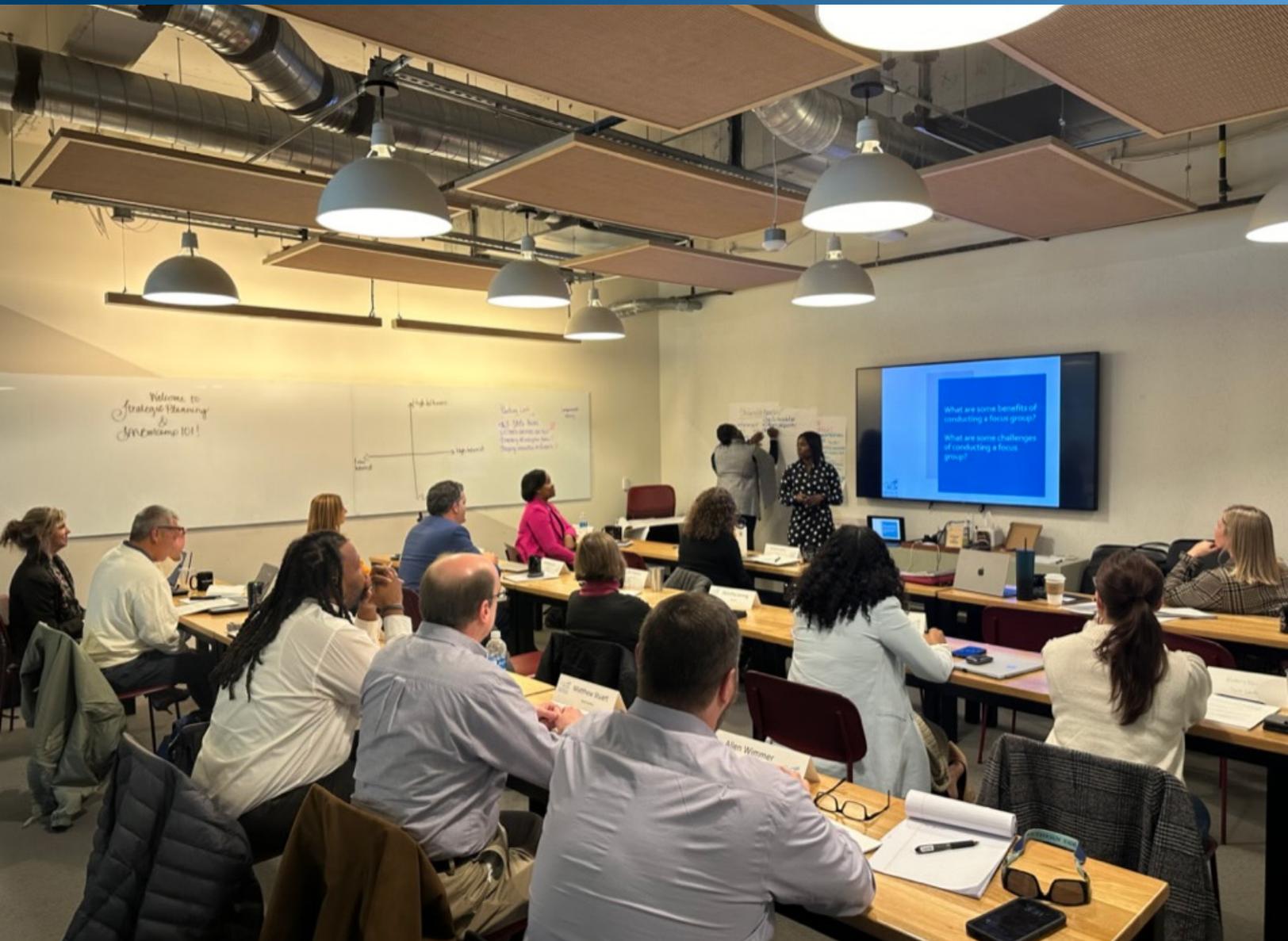




NCJA Center for  
Justice Planning

# 2023 Annual Report

January 2024



## Executive Summary

The National Criminal Justice Association (NCJA)'s Center for Justice Planning (CJP) team is a national training and technical assistance (TTA) center. With support from the Bureau of Justice Assistance (BJA), the CJP provides TTA to State Administering Agencies (SAAs) managing the Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne JAG) and the Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP). The CJP also provides TTA to local Criminal Justice Planning Boards (CJPBs) and Criminal Justice Coordinating Councils (CJCCs). NCJA's CJP provides a wide array of resources and guidance to help SAAs ensure Byrne JAG and Byrne SCIP funding are utilized as effectively as possible and make the greatest impact on improving the criminal justice system. The center's TTA is grounded in strategic planning and includes direct assistance, training and peer-to-peer opportunities, disseminating multimedia content and resources, providing Subject Matter Experts (SMEs), and support for data collection efforts and program evaluation. The CJP's TTA program is highly customizable and tailored to individual agency needs, and the team remains vigilant to ensure resources and assistance remain adaptable and relevant to the needs of the SAAs and beyond.

## New Name, Same Great Team

In February 2023, the CJP team decided to change its name from the "Byrne JAG SAA TTA team" to the "NCJA Center for Justice Planning team." There are a few reasons for the name change, but the primary reason is that the team wanted a more expansive name. Although SAAs are still the center's core TTA recipients, the team also provides assistance to CJCCs and CJPBs, and provides TTA surrounding the Byrne SCIP program as well. Additionally, NCJA has a host of other centers: The OVC Center for VOCA Administrators, the NCJA Center for Grants Management and the NCJA Data Center. The team's new name fits well amongst the other centers, lending NCJA brand consistency and avoiding confusion for TTA recipients.

# 2023 Highlights



3 strategic planning workshops attended by 25 states.



Direct Byrne JAG TTA (tiers 2 and 3) reached 20 states.



Direct Byrne SCIP TTA (tiers 2 and 3) reached more than 20 states.



3 topic-focused trainings attended by over 250 participants.



Graduation of the 2nd cohort of the NCJA Leadership Academy.



Launch of the Center for Justice Planning newsletter.



The NCJA Podcast received 868 unique listens, up 49 percent from 2022.



Release of resources & publications, including the launch of the SAA Marketing Toolkit.



Launch of 6 specialized TTA projects, including a program evaluation pilot project.

## Byrne JAG Training and Technical Assistance

The heart of the CJP's BJA-funded TTA for Byrne JAG is support for SAAs to create and strengthen their Byrne JAG strategic plans. Over the course of 2023, the CJP held several workshops and trainings, continued to support states through direct technical assistance and launched a variety of special projects and initiatives.

### I. Trainings and Workshops

#### *Strategic Planning Workshops*

Strategic planning workshops are central to the CJP's TTA program, as workshops serve as building blocks for SAAs and their staff to learn about strategic planning best practices and ultimately revise, develop and improve their own strategic plans. These workshops cover a range of topics including understanding Byrne JAG and its strategic planning requirements, engaging traditional and non-traditional stakeholders, data gathering and analysis, program evaluation, goal setting and diversifying funding. In 2023, the CJP held three strategic planning workshops: Strategic Planning 201, a Strategic Planning Crash Course and a combined

New SAA Bootcamp and Strategic Planning 101 workshop. These workshops were held in-person and allowed for greater discussion and participation. Combined, these training events reached 32 participants representing 25 states. The New SAA Bootcamp workshop is specifically designed to help new SAA administrators and their staff acclimate to their positions and learn key responsibilities and critical elements of JAG grant program administration. In addition to the in-person New SAA Bootcamp and Strategic Planning 101 workshop, a virtual, standalone New SAA Bootcamp was conducted, which reached 26 participants representing 16 states.



*"The workshop was a tremendous help in providing information on JAG Strategic Planning. As we are making plans to begin our planning, the workshop has helped to understand the process and the level of involvement needed in putting together a viable document that will guide the development of critical projects and funding to our law enforcement and criminal justice community."*

*"Overall, this was an informative introduction to JAG Strategic Planning. Dynamic group of presenters who put a lot of energy into what could be a very dry subject matter."*



#### *Braided Funding Training*

Leveraging multiple forms of funding sources helps create programs and initiatives that are sustainable, comprehensive and collaborative. In August, the CJP partnered with the OVC Center for VOCA Administrators to offer a braided funding webinar to discuss leveraging funding through a braided funding model. The 81 participants representing 23 states also heard from fellow SAAs in AZ, HI, and TN about how they implement braided funding initiatives in their respective states.

#### *NCJA Leadership Academy*

[NCJA's Leadership Academy](#) is designed to provide SAAs and other criminal justice agency leaders and senior staff with the skills necessary to lead effectively, to enhance their capacity as administrators and to position their agency to address emerging justice system challenges. The second cohort of the Leadership Academy was completed in 2023. During the course of roughly six months, this academy discussed topics such as executive leadership; personal and professional development; decision-making and changing management; data; and equity and inclusion.



*"This was the best experience I have had in my leadership journey thus far. I thank NCJA staff and consultants for a wonderful academy and encourage them to keep it going. It is much needed and helps Exec level leaders to be better and run healthier and more efficient organizations."*



*"Thank you so much for this awesome, life-changing experience with so many talented and passionate group of professionals. I will always cherish this experience and know it was amazing not just for me professionally but personally."*

## II. Direct Technical Assistance

At any given time, the CJP team is serving 10–20 states with direct technical assistance. The TTA team aims to “never say no” and to “meet states where they are.” Organized by region and by subject matter expertise, team members provide direct technical assistance in three tiers to all Byrne JAG SAAs on a wide range of topics, including assistance with all areas within the development of strategic plans: developing SMART goals and performance metrics, assisting with stakeholder engagement efforts, developing surveys, and facilitating focus groups and planning sessions with state planning bodies. Additionally, the team researches promising programs and nationwide trends, develops peer-to-peer learning connections and provides support for data collection efforts and program evaluation. In 2023, the CJP provided direct assistance to over 20 states. This technical assistance included:

- Providing stakeholder survey support ranging from development to analysis for at least five states.
- Offering evaluation support through a partnership with the Center for Justice Innovation (CJI).
- Sharing resources and reviewing strategic plans to provide tailored feedback.
- Conducting in-person focus group facilitation on behalf of states.

## CJP Communications and Engagement

One of NCJA’s tenets as an organization is being a thought leader in the criminal justice field; the CJP embodies this by disseminating many resources across a variety of media platforms. Providing promising practices, programs and guidance to SAAs gives agencies ideas of what to fund and allows them to stay informed about promising, innovative and/or evidence-informed programming.

### I. The NCJA Podcast



[The NCJA Podcast](#) highlights promising criminal justice practices and programs funded by SAAs and beyond and provides guidance on strategic planning and Byrne JAG essentials. In 2023, the CJP team created 10 episodes of the NCJA Podcast; topics include meaningful community engagement, setting priorities in strategic planning, an overview of restorative justice principles, and a spotlight of Illinois’ capacity building project for community-based organizations, the [Institute 2 Innovate](#). In 2023, the NCJA Podcast received 868 unique listens, up 49 percent from 2022. In 2023, podcast listeners grew by 62 percent and the podcast received a 129 percent growth in streams. Analytics indicate podcast episodes are shared with others who may find them helpful, primarily through direct link (50 percent) or text (33 percent). The following page highlights two the most successful episodes of the year.

## Episode 20: [Community Engagement: A Guide to Meaningful Relationship Building](#)

Discover the meaning of intentional community engagement, including best practices for engaging individuals and/or organizations from marginalized communities who have been historically shut out of grant and government processes, and how to overcome challenges and barriers in engagement by thinking outside the standard box of practices.



*Did you know? This episode was streamed 394 percent more than our average episode.*

## Episode 24: [An Overview of Restorative Justice Principles](#)

Tune in to this foundational overview of restorative justice principles, including the benefits and importance of restorative practices, key pillars, and how restorative justice models and practices fit into larger discussion of equity within the criminal justice system. Furthermore, learn how these practices and models represent a paradigm shift in justice making.



*Did you know? This was the NCJA Podcast's top episode of the year and ranks third in all-time listens.*

## II. SAA Newsletter



In September 2023, the CJP launched the inaugural issue of its new monthly newsletter, *Centering Planning: Essential News and Resources for SAAs*. Each issue includes a programmatic spotlight and curated resources and events. Additionally, each issue contains a poll; newsletter recipients complete the poll and, in the following issue, view how their peers responded. In 2023, three issues were released. The newsletter's average open rate was 50 percent, and the average click rate was 5.2 percent. These numbers exceed the average for all industries conducting email marketing—the average open rate for all industries is roughly [36 percent](#), with a click rate under 2 percent.

## III. 2023 Byrne Bytes Campaign



Due to the success of the 2022 [Byrne Bytes social media campaign](#), in 2023, the CJP launched a new social media campaign to highlight basic information about what the Byrne JAG grant program is as well as the wide array of programs and projects it can support. Between May and July of 2023, the CJP released a weekly series of social media posts, with corresponding graphics, to Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. The posts received consistent engagement on social media, mostly in the form of likes. On LinkedIn, for example, NCJA has over 11,000 followers, so although the team anticipates having reached all 56 SAAs, other partners were most likely also reached. This project is part of the CJP's larger goal of producing and distributing easy to understand informational materials on the JAG program.

## Byrne SCIP Training and Technical Assistance

The CJP provides TTA for the Byrne SCIP program to both Byrne SCIP SAAs and Byrne JAG SAAs through the new ninth Byrne JAG program area (state crisis intervention programs). NCJA was awarded the Byrne SCIP TTA grant for category three with a focus on data collection and evaluation. The CJP team also assists with Crisis Intervention Advisory Boards (CIABs) and general planning efforts. NCJA is one of three TTA providers on the Byrne SCIP program, along with Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Violence Solutions and the National Center for Juvenile and Family Court Judges.

## I. Program Planning and TTA Coordination

Byrne SCIP has been an evolving and innovative program that continues to have various moving parts. The CJP has assisted states in staying informed and engaged by creating a Byrne SCIP temporary landing page that houses basic TTA provider information and that serves as a platform for states to request TTA. In addition, the CJP, along with the other two TTA providers for Byrne SCIP, held a webinar to educate grantees on available support and direct TTA. Additionally, the CJP has also created resources for SAAs to better understand Byrne SCIP related requirements; these documents will be forthcoming, hopefully in early 2024.

## II. Direct Technical Assistance

In 2023, through these two TTA awards, the CJP supported more than 20 states with direct technical assistance as they navigated and planned for the new Byrne SCIP funding and new program area. With Byrne SCIP being a new funding stream, the CJP has supported new SAAs in their planning phases, which has included assistance with the following: developing program plans, creating required CIABs and ensuring the required stakeholders are engaged. The CJP serves as a touchpoint for SAAs and provides continuous communication to address the SAAs' Byrne SCIP related questions and concerns as they arise. Direct technical assistance included:

- Providing support and guidance for states developing their program plans, including sharing resources and example state program plans.
- Assistance and support with stakeholder engagement through the creation of surveys to identify priorities and presentations to CIABs.
- Support with forming CIABs, including stakeholder engagement efforts.
- Connecting states with the other two TTA providers as needed.

## Committees and Peer-to-Peer Learning

### I. NCJA Board of Directors Marketing Committee

After hearing from a few SAAs about the challenges of communicating the story and role of the SAA, the NCJA Board of Directors Marketing Committee was created to find a solution. The committee elected to create a survey to determine whether all SAAs have similar communications-related needs. The survey asked SAAs questions regarding their capacity levels, the ways in which they interact with partners and stakeholders, and what they wish various partners knew about the role of the SAA that they currently do not know. The survey helped to inform and guide [the SAA Marketing Toolkit](#). The toolkit, designed in conjunction with the committee, helps SAAs communicate their role, who they serve, and other pertinent

information to stakeholders and other partners. The toolkit is comprised of stock language and imagery, templates and guidance. SAAs are encouraged to customize the toolkit materials to their individualized needs. Subsequent toolkit phases will include additional templates and guidance on grants administration, communicating the impact of funded programs and funding priorities, timing important communications-related efforts and more. The complete toolkit is expected to be released in spring of 2024.



## II. Equity in Criminal Justice Funding and Budgeting Committee



Originally launched in 2021, NCJA's equity committee was relaunched in 2023 with the new mission of *developing guidance for the purpose of creating meaningful relationships between community organizations, historically devalued communities, and funders/decision makers to better determine and leverage access and resources to effectively address public safety and achieve equity in the criminal justice system.* Chaired by Delrice Adams, executive director of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, members include representatives from community-based organizations, victims assistance, law enforcement, SAAs and more. The committee, which supports NCJA's broader work of equity advancement, engages in important discussions on a reoccurring basis to holistically address equity in criminal justice funding and budgeting. Throughout 2024 the committee will develop a variety of guidance documents. These documents will cover various topics such as tips for engaging with community partners and system partners, and the importance of language and language access.

## III. NCJA Innovation Labs



NCJA's Innovation Labs are topic-focused working sessions spanning the course of six months with facilitated discussions for peer-to-peer learning, planning and brainstorming. Labs include resource development, planning and program development, hearing promising practices on innovative programming and participant collaboration on summarized recommendations for other SAAs. Labs are participant led, with a time commitment of approximately 90 minutes per month for six months. In 2023, the CJP held a lab focused on *Supporting Innovations within the Law Enforcement Program Area*. Lab participants were reflective of six states and one interlocal government entity. The innovation lab concluded with the creation of a [lab report outlining key takeaways](#), and a lab convening which allowed lab participants to describe their innovation lab experience, including any personal tie-ins to the lab content, lessons learned and strategies gleaned through the innovation lab sessions.

## Looking Forward to 2024

In addition to the continued offering of the CJP's foundational training and direct technical assistance, the CJP has several opportunities to look forward to in 2024. These include:

**Sequential Intercept Model (SIM) Convening:** Developed in the early 2000s, [the Sequential Intercept Model \(SIM\)](#) is a practical model used to identify gaps within criminal justice systems and highlight resources to bridge those gaps for individuals with behavioral health needs. The model maps out six points, or "intercepts," in the criminal justice system, recognizing that individuals with behavioral health problems can be pulled deeper into the criminal justice system depending on what occurs at these intercepts. Used as a strategic tool, the model aims to help intercept individuals with behavioral health needs and connect them to needed resources, support and treatment to prevent further involvement in the criminal justice system. In 2024, NCJA will host a SIM Convening to provide an opportunity for SAAs to learn more about the SIM, hear from SMEs about best practices related to behavioral health programs and learn how other states are supporting behavioral health and crisis response initiatives.

**New 2024 NCJA Innovation Labs:** The CJP will host two new Innovation Labs in 2024, *Supporting Rural Communities* and *Supporting Behavioral Health and Crisis Response Initiatives*.

**2024 Leadership Academy:** NCJA will launch the third cohort of the Leadership Academy for Criminal Justice Executives in January 2024. Over the course of six months, 12 SAA directors and deputy directors will learn about topics such as leading through understanding oneself and others, engaging with legislators, equity and inclusion, and navigating difficult conversations.

**Rural Engagement:** The CJP will begin specifically helping SAAs support rural communities in 2024. Rural communities face unique challenges, such as staff shortages, inadequate resources and a lack of funding, which often leads many rural areas to be underserved. Through a partnership with [Rulo Strategies](#), a rural working group will convene to discuss recommendations on grantmaking, TTA and strategies to engage rural practitioners in the strategic planning process. Additionally, sites can receive direct assistance. Eventually, two webinars and two podcast episodes will be available based on the work emerging from this project. In collaboration with Rulo Strategies, this project will identify and address the distinctive issues and crime trends in these communities, so that comprehensive support can be provided.

**Byrne SCIP Website:** The CJP is developing a stand-alone Byrne SCIP resource website to serve as the main resource hub for Byrne SCIP grantees. This website will house Byrne SCIP related resources, a calendar of events, an SAA directory, and will provide information on the TTA providers. TTA will be able to be directly requested through the site.

**Board Development Workshop:** In 2024, the CJP plans to launch its first board development workshop, which is geared toward SAA and CJCC staff, including JAG and SCIP grant managers. The in-person training will include sections such as high-level information about the role of boards, including key responsibilities and creating an effective culture; engaging stakeholders; strategic planning and relationship building; techniques to improve consensus building and facilitation skill development. The workshop will incorporate staff and participant experiences, with plenty of space for peer-to-peer sharing and learning. Although still in the planning stages, the workshop will tentatively include scenarios and various role-playing exercises to help participants navigate the complex dynamics of board management.

**SAA Deskbook:** The SAA Deskbook is a resource for new and existing Byrne JAG and Byrne SCIP SAA administrators and their staff as they navigate through local, state and federal financial and programmatic issues involving administering federal justice programs. Originally created in 2013, this updated resource articulates the requisite knowledge and skills an SAA needs to administer federal grants effectively and includes modules highlighting the role of the SAA, federal funding 101, Byrne SCIP and Byrne JAG overviews, strategic planning 101, stakeholder engagement, federal reporting requirements and more. The revised SAA Deskbook will be highly accessible through frequent online updates to keep up with any changes in laws, policies and funding. Moreover, this resource will include valuable tips from former SAAs.

## Center for Justice Planning: 2023 Year in Photos



Strategic Planning 201, Jan. 2023



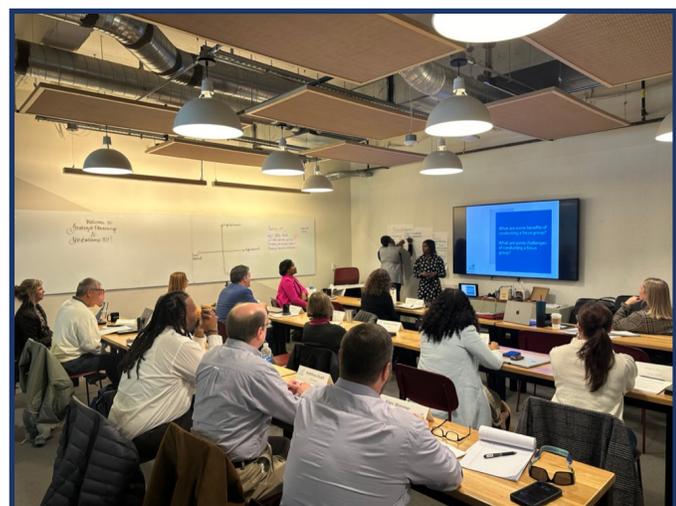
Equity Leadership Academy Session, Nov. 2022



Strategic Planning Crash Course, April 2023



Cohort Two Leadership Academy Graduates, Jan. 2023



New SAA Bootcamp & Strategic Planning 101, Nov. 2023



HI Focus Group Facilitation, June 2023