Quarterly Public CAA Call: Community Assessment Essentials

March 11, 2025

National Community Action Partnership
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THE PROMISE OF COMMUNITY ACTION

Community Action changes people's lives, embodies the spirit of hope, improves communities, and makes America a better place to live. We care about the entire community, and we are dedicated to helping people help themselves and each other.

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Let’s do a quick poll

What part of the Community Assessment do you most enjoy?

- Developing the plan
- Gathering Data
- Analyzing Data
- Developing the Final Report
- Disseminating the Assessment
- Um…. None of it?
- I’ve never done a Community Assessment before



Public CAAs are typically units of local government. The local government is the entity who is responsible for the CAA, as opposed to the board of a private non-profit CAA.



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Community Assessment Overview



A **systematic process** for creating a profile of the **LOCAL** needs & resources of the community



A process that produces a clear **description of the specific causes & conditions of poverty** that are facing individuals and families in a given community



Takes into consideration the existing resources available in the community to meet the needs of its residents with low income, and the gaps in existing resources that are preventing economic mobility



Requires broad input from the community, including people with low incomes & with lived experience



Informs Agency planning, including how the agency allocates CSBG Resources

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A Comprehensive Community Action Community Assessment Process



What do we want/need to know?

- Key areas based on priorities (strategic plan, administration, board)
- Questions from key stakeholders
- Emerging needs/opportunities/trends
- Answer questions from program evaluation

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Community Assessment Requirements

CSBG Requirements

- CSBG Act
- CSBG Organizational Standards
- CSBG State Office Requirements

Other Funding Source Requirements

- Head Start
- HUD
- Other Programs?

Local Government Requirements

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Community Action Board Engagement

Communicate the need for & purpose of the Community Assessment

Define scope of the Community Assessment

- Are there particular questions or information the board needs in the assessment?
- Timeline
- Budget

Clarify the role of the board in the Community Assessment

- **Not one size fits all** –how does the board want to be involved? How can they support?

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Collecting Data from the Community



Decide what quantitative data is needed

CNA Online Tool

US Census

Local

Agency

Surveys



Decide what qualitative data is needed

Interviews

Focus Groups

Forums

Open Ended Survey Questions

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Use Existing Resources

Other Community Needs Assessments

- Other community organizations do needs assessments including hospitals, public health, county or regional child care organizations, economic development, etc.

Easily accessible (and useable) data

- Include agency datasets!
- Think about unique datasets you have access to

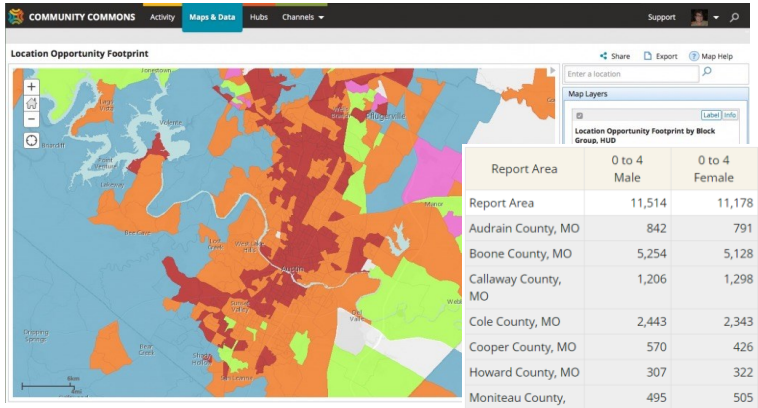
Use data mapping and aggregation tools

- NCAP Data Hub

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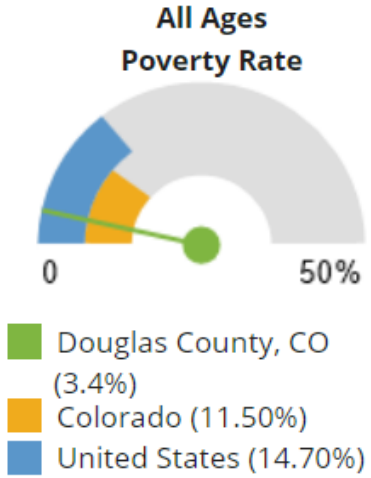
NCAP Data Hub – A CNA Tool

- Access this free site by visiting https://cap.engagementnetwork.org/
- User Guides and Videos available



Report Area	0 to 4 Male	0 to 4 Female	5 to 17 Male	5 to 17 Female	18 to 64 Male	18 to 64 Female	Over 64 Male	Over 64 Female
Report Area	11,514	11,178	30,457	28,996	122,910	122,982	18,728	26,329
Audrain County, MO	842	791	2,409	2,083	6,694	8,720	1,619	2,459
Boone County, MO	5,254	5,128	12,720	12,140	57,058	61,253	6,754	9,716
Callaway County, MO	1,206	1,298	3,596	3,559	15,065	13,666	2,613	3,387
Cole County, MO	2,443	2,343	6,549	6,319	25,210	23,329	4,125	5,841
Cooper County, MO	570	426	1,511	1,407	6,002	4,817	1,127	1,615
Howard County, MO	307	322	847	809	3,179	3,086	655	879
Moniteau County, MO	495	505	1,509	1,451	5,257	4,323	914	1,245
Osage County, MO	397	365	1,316	1,228	4,445	3,788	921	1,187
Missouri	192,851	183,921	524,308	499,599	1,852,211	1,887,957	354,302	509,968
United States	10,175,713	9,736,305	27,479,063	26,292,744	98,539,826	99,675,893	17,538,907	25,075,799

Data Source: US Census Bureau, American Community Survey. 2011-15. Source geography: County



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Other Quantitative Data Tools

- *United States Census – American Fact Finder*
  - This part of the Census Bureau website allows users to search and select different demographics to generate state tables.
- *Living Wage Calculator*
  - From the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, this tool “is designed to provide a minimum estimate of the cost of living for low wage families”
- *CFED Assets & Opportunity Local Data Center*
  - For statistics and maps on asset poverty, liquid asset poverty, unbanked, and underbanked rates by city, county, metro area and state
- *HUD eGIS Community Assessment Reporting Tool*
  - For both needs and available resources including Community Planning and Development Grants, Rental Assistance, Mortgage Insurance, Fair Housing, Housing Counseling, and Demographics
- *Centers for Disease Control and prevention Community Health Status Indicators Peer Counties Comparison*
  - Access this dashboard for how different counties in your service area compare to peer counties across various health indicators
- *Food Research and Action Center’s Interactive Data Tools on Nutrition*
  - Visit the FRAC Research Library to access data and maps on school breakfast, summer food programs, and state profile reports

Surveys…



Surveys are one (potentially important) data source in Community Assessment



How the survey is crafted and deployed will impact results



Tools to help guide writing survey questions:

[University of Pittsburg Tips for Writing Survey Questions]

[Harvard Tipsheet on Question Wording]

Wait...
I Can't Address All These Needs?!?!



- No one agency can address every identified need.
- You may need to prioritize needs based on agency mission, capacity, and available resources *(including yours and other community resources)*

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Final Approval

- What channels of approval are required for your CAA?
  - Consider how long it takes!

- **The Board must vote to accept the assessment and record in Board minutes *(Organizational Standard 3.5)***
  - Give the board time and opportunity to review the assessment prior to when its time to approve

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Disseminating the Community Assessment

- Use multiple channels to disseminate the Community Assessment
  - **What are some methods you can use?**

- ***Be sure to close the loop with anyone who the CAA engaged in the process***
  - Trust building includes showing how your agency has used the information you collected
  - Be sure to think about this for your Community Action Plan as well

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Some Final Thoughts…



Community Assessment is a unique opportunity to engage constituents and community members

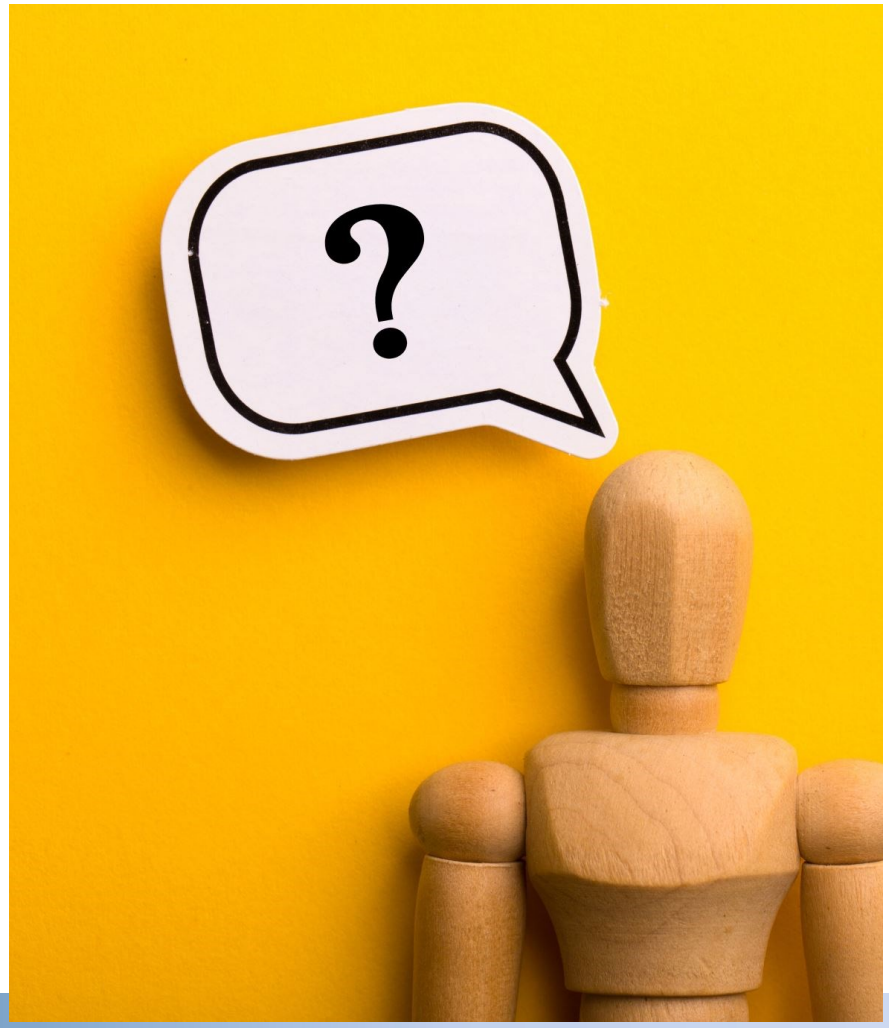


Community Assessment can be a great asset to the community to support other grant writing, resource prioritization, and policy development



Community Assessment can be both easier and more complex in a public CAA

Questions, Comments, Advice?



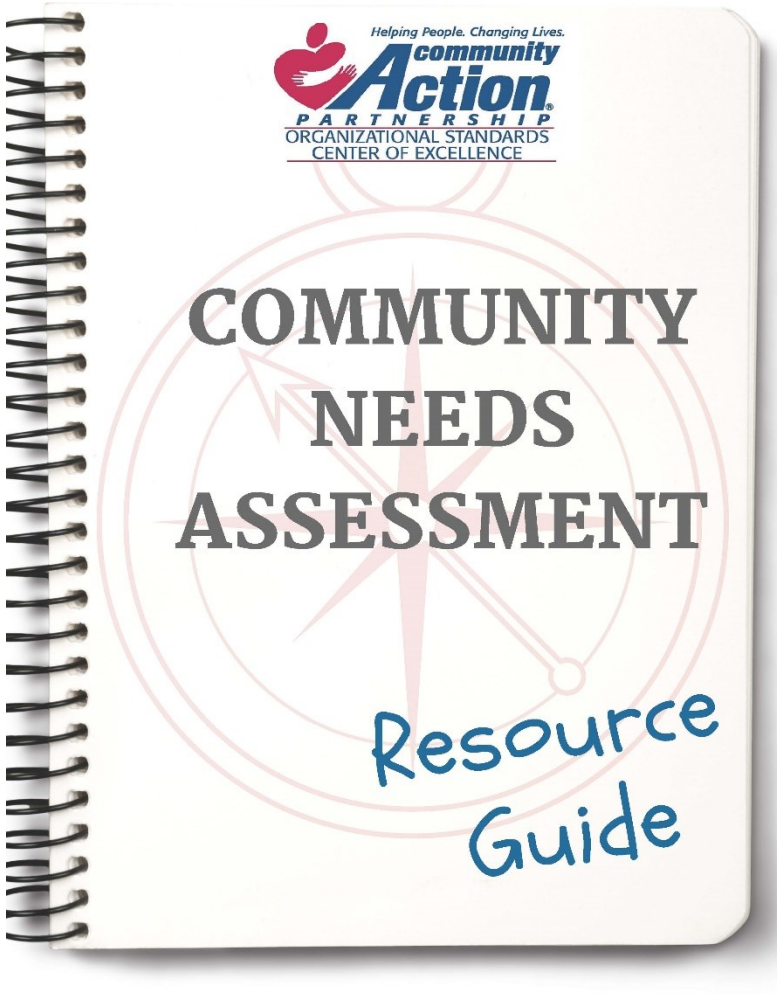
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Tools
and
Resources

CA Resources

Resource Guide

Contains a variety of links, videos, sample documents, tools, etc. for assistance planning and completing a Community Assessment



https://communityactionpartnership.com/publication_toolkit/community-needs-assessment-resource-guide/

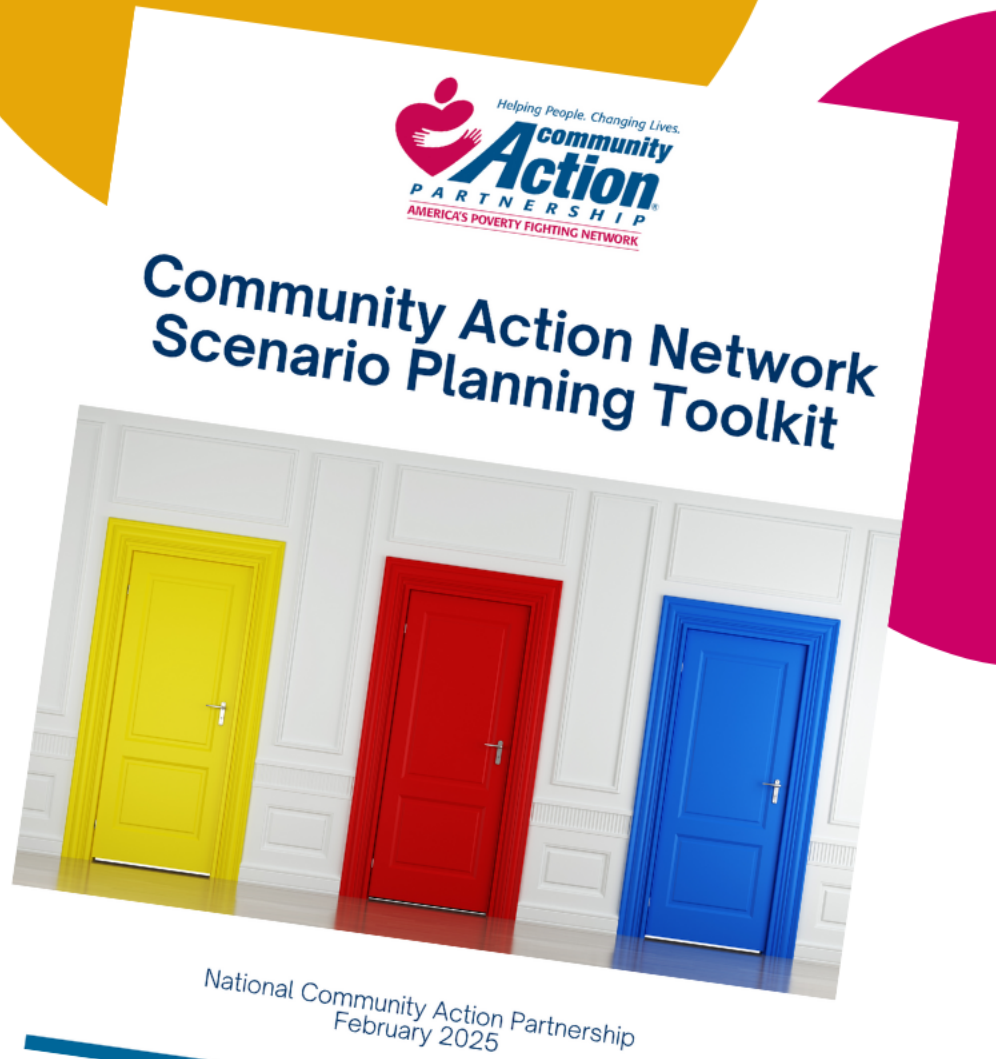
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NEW RESOURCE: NCAP'S SCENARIO PLANNING TOOLKIT

The Scenario Planning Toolkit equips CAAs and State Associations with curated tools and resources to navigate uncertainty.

Use the toolkit to:

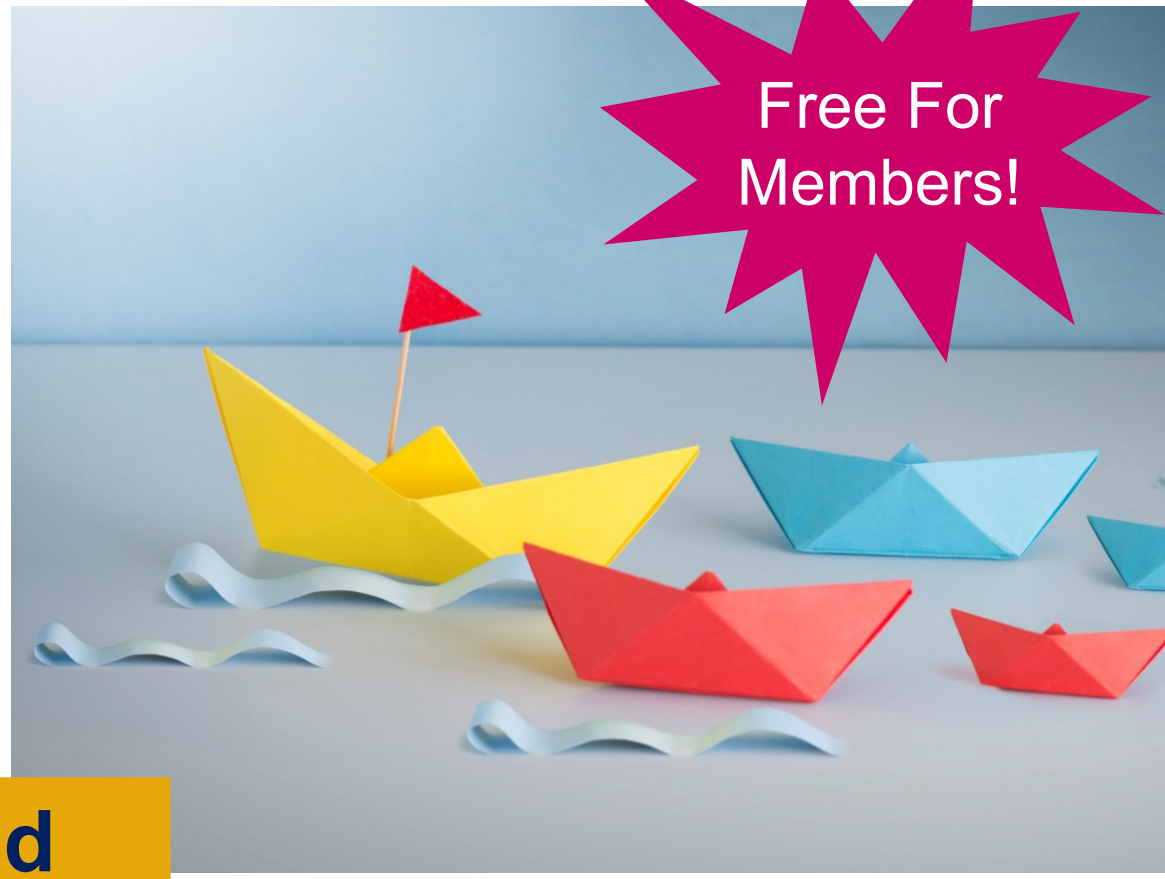
- **Assess and plan for key impact areas: financial, operations , programmatic, and community.**
- **Identify challenges, evaluate impacts, and develop strategies for changing conditions.**
- **Strengthen decision-making and organizational resilience by exploring multiple future scenarios.**



SCAN ME!

March Focus:
Leadership for Dynamic Times Webinar Series

Financial risks, shifting priorities, and funding changes challenge leadership. This webinar series explores how Executive Directors, Fiscal Directors, and Boards can navigate uncertainty. On March 19, Kay Sohl covers the executive-fiscal partnership, and on March 25, NCAP discusses board leadership strategies.



Free For Members!

Learn More and Register Here

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ORGANIZATIONAL STANDARDS SKILL BUILDER TRAINING

Join Us for a Virtual or In-Person Training!



Virtual Sessions:

Tuesday, March 18 & Thursday, March 20

1 PM – 5 PM ET

Future Sessions TBA

Learn More:

NCAP 2025 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Detroit, MI | August 27th – 29th

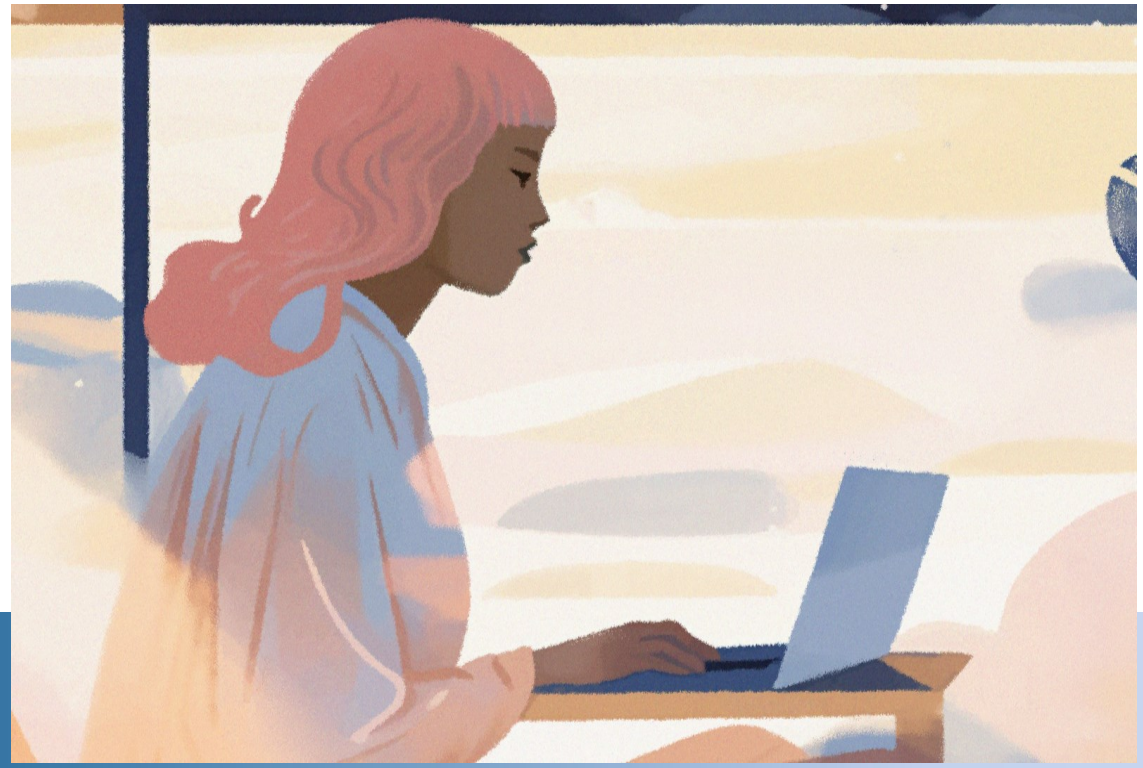
What kinds of sessions or topics would you like to see at the Annual Convention specifically for public CAAs?



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Next Meeting:
Quarterly Public CAA Call with Denise Harlow

May 6, 2025 | 2:00 PM ET



Register Here

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