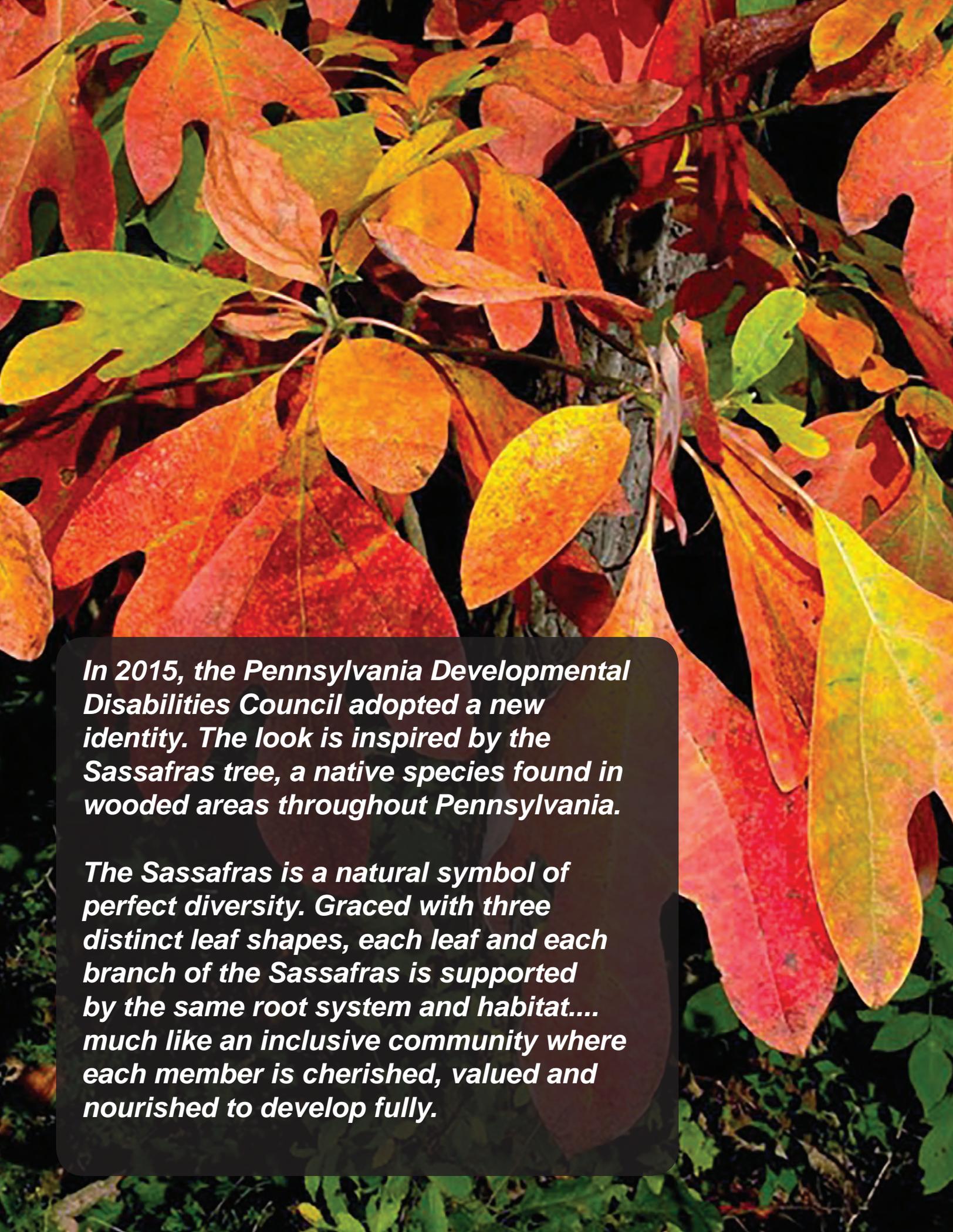




Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council  
State Plan Update  
**2012-2016**





*In 2015, the Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council adopted a new identity. The look is inspired by the Sassafras tree, a native species found in wooded areas throughout Pennsylvania.*

*The Sassafras is a natural symbol of perfect diversity. Graced with three distinct leaf shapes, each leaf and each branch of the Sassafras is supported by the same root system and habitat.... much like an inclusive community where each member is cherished, valued and nourished to develop fully.*

# Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council State Plan Update 2014-2015

## Introduction

On the following pages, you will have the opportunity to learn about some of the work that happened in support of the 2012-2016 state plan. This update covers years three and four of the plan cycle, and includes information from 2014 and 2015.

Thank you for your interest in this very important work. Should you wish to view the entire federal report that covers all of our grant projects, you may visit [www.ddsuite.org](http://www.ddsuite.org) where the complete “*Council State Plans and Program Performance Reports*” are published.

## The Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council Vision and Mission

We envision a Commonwealth comprised of inclusive communities where all people with disabilities are valued and thrive.

The Council engages in advocacy, systems change and capacity building for people with developmental disabilities and their families in order to

- Support people with disabilities in taking control of their own lives.
- Ensure access to goods, services and supports.
- Build inclusive communities.
- Pursue a cross disability agenda, and
- Change negative societal attitudes toward people with disabilities

In so doing we will bring about benefits to individuals with disabilities other than developmental disabilities and, indeed, to all people.



# Focus: Empowerment

**Goal: People with disabilities and their family members will become actively engaged in activities that give them increased choice and control in systems that have a direct impact on their lives and in the communities in which they live.**

## Project Highlight—Leadership Development in Schools

The objective: To facilitate opportunities for children in Pennsylvania to strengthen their leadership skills and educate those working within the systems to enhance the potential of all children to be leaders.

### A Focus on Students

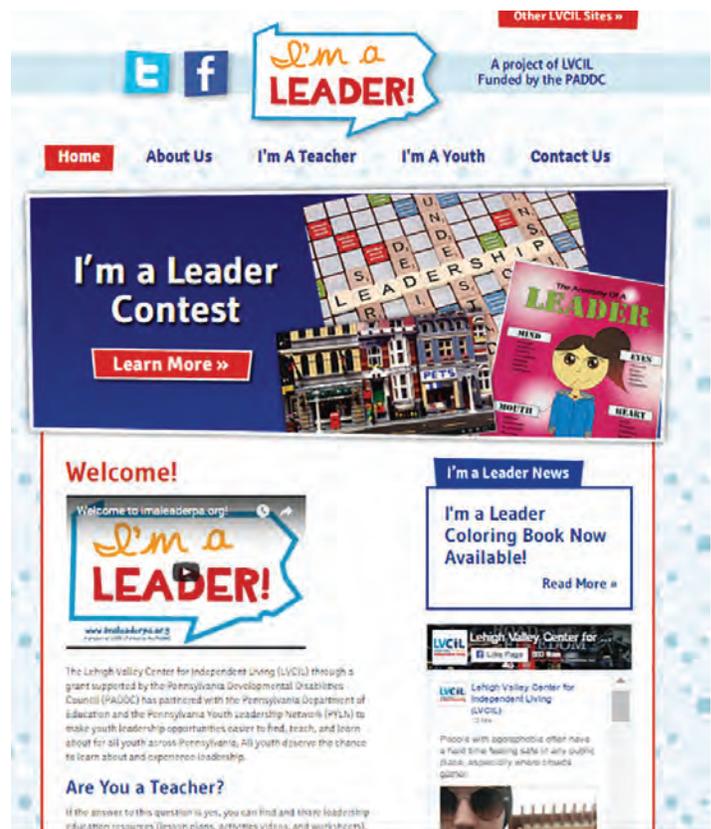
Lehigh Valley Center for Independent Living (LVCIL) developed a web site called I'm a Leader PA ([www.imaleaderpa.org](http://www.imaleaderpa.org)).

Here, students can find videos, reading materials and suggested activities on leadership. This is also the gateway for the "I'm A Leader" contest, which seeks to inspire students to think about what leadership means to themselves, or to describe what they see as great leadership qualities in another person.

In 2015, more than 150 photographs, pieces of artwork, stories, poems, songs, and videos were submitted by students in grades 7-12 from across Pennsylvania. The winning entries may be viewed on the web site. In addition, to the web site and contest, school assemblies on leadership are conducted.

### The Focus for Teachers

Both an advisory committee and a curriculum development committee to promote student leadership have been developed. As a result, there is an active sharing database where educators can both submit and locate lesson plans on leadership. In addition, the school assemblies that are held for students include an information session for teachers about leadership.





## Additional Empowerment Highlights

500

More than 500 people engaged in Self Advocates United as 1 through teleconferences, meetings, Skype and newsletters.

1,143

In 2015, 1,143 individuals (339 with disabilities) who are involved in grassroots disability groups received technical assistance and training so that they can make positive change in their communities.

2,289

The National Survey about Siblings of Individuals with Disabilities garnered 2,289 responses, including 889 siblings, 201 people with disabilities, 712 parents, and 478 professionals.

3,967

3,967 students and teachers in Pennsylvania have been trained in leadership, advocacy and self-determination.



# Focus: Systems Change

**Goal: The Council and its grantees will work towards making positive changes in systems that impact people with disabilities in Pennsylvania in order to ensure that they have access to the goods, services and supports they need to be engaged and active members of their communities.**

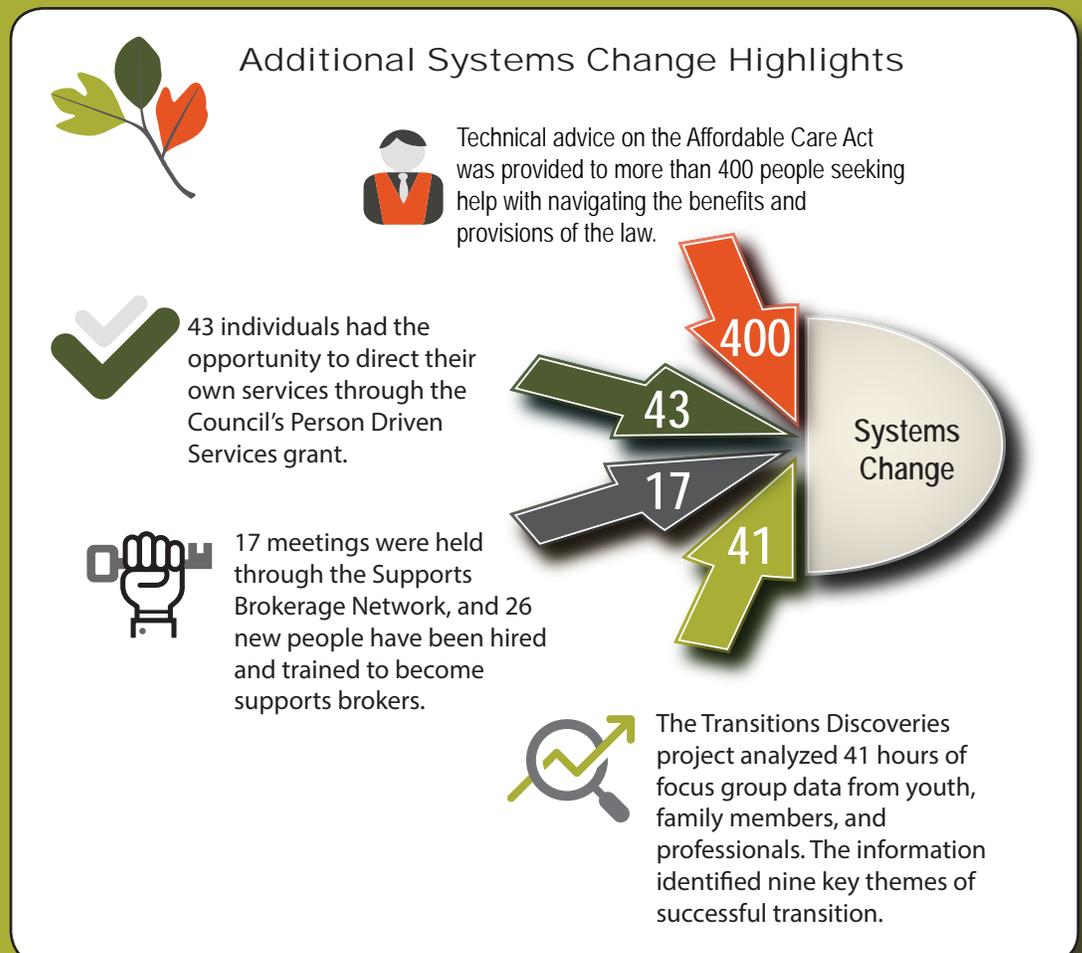
## Project Highlight—Criminal Justice Disability Awareness

The objective: To establish a training curriculum to personnel of the criminal justice system, including court officers, prison officers, law enforcement officers, lawyers, etc., in disability awareness, rights and etiquette.

A cross-system, cross-disciplinary advisory committee along with Council project leads and a project officer accomplished the goal of educating criminal justice professionals about the unique challenges people with intellectual and developmental disabilities face when they encounter the criminal justice system as victims, witnesses, suspects, and defendants.

Outcomes included in-person trainings, webinars, printed materials, videos, and technical assistance.

- An archive of resources and webinars is available at the Temple Institute on Disabilities web site ([www.disabilities.temple.edu](http://www.disabilities.temple.edu)). One group of webinars focus on the intersection of people with intellectual/developmental disabilities and the criminal justice system. Another series of webinars was developed for prosecutors, criminal defense attorneys and other professionals.
- Organizations requesting presentations on the topic included the National Missing and Exploited Children's Program, the Arc of the United States National Center for Criminal Justice and Disabilities, and the State Employment Leadership Network.



# Focus: Cross Disability

**Goal:** The Council will facilitate increased opportunities for communication and the sharing of different disability experiences that affect all people with disabilities in common areas of their lives, such as housing, health, employment, community inclusion, etc., and the cross-disability impact of shared stigma and segregation.

## Project Highlight—Cross Disability Efforts

The objective: To host statewide cross-disability panel discussions that focus on continuities and discontinuities in disability agendas.

Finding common ground is a primary goal of the Cross Disability Efforts project. Through almost 20 forums held across Pennsylvania, people had the opportunity to engage in conversations on topics such as stigma, community (or lack thereof), and silos. The feedback from attendees can be categorized into three main themes—accessibility, inclusion, and culture.

These conversations inspired broader thinking on the topics of disability and diversity, and resulted in the idea to initiate a “super forum,” which would engage stakeholders from across the state. A summit meeting is scheduled for the fall of 2016 to help develop mutual understanding and respect for the diverse opinions, histories and knowledge bases of various organizations and interest groups who seek to work together to build better communities for all Pennsylvanians.



## Additional Cross Disability Highlights

1400

The Policy Information Exchange (PIE) had more than 1,400 followers and is using social media tools, such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to facilitate communication between the disability community and policymakers at all levels.

300

More than 300 people participated in the conversation about cross disability issues.

# Focus: Generic Change

**Goal: We seek to increase the capacity of generic communities and systems to ensure that the systems and supports that are available to the community in general are made equally available, with appropriate accommodation, to Pennsylvanians with disabilities.**

## Project Highlight—Accessible Dreams

The objective: To facilitate opportunities for children in Pennsylvania to To increase the number of accessible and affordable housing options for people with disabilities and their families across Pennsylvania.

The intent of this project was not only to improve choice in housing options for people with disabilities, but also to create systems change in the public and private housing sectors. The successes can be attributed to many things, but the extensive range of partnerships that were developed between county entities, builders, architects and nonprofits during the process is a shining example of collaboration at its best.

Even before the first unit in Greene County, PA, was available for occupancy, the number of applications from potential tenants indicated there was a need for additional spaces. The award and construction of a second unit demonstrated the replicability of the model. Going further, and with input from focus groups of people with disabilities, Accessible Dreams approached a local home builder who created a one-level living, model touring home, where open house tours are conducted. Several families have expressed interest in purchasing the design. This project has garnered national attention and the grantee was invited to make a presentation at The National Manufactured Home Owners Association 2015 Conference.

Accessible dreams is also working to increase access to rental properties, and is serving as a resource for real estate agents in southwestern Pennsylvania who need help with finding solutions for aging seniors, wounded veterans, families of children with disabilities, and others needing accessible housing.



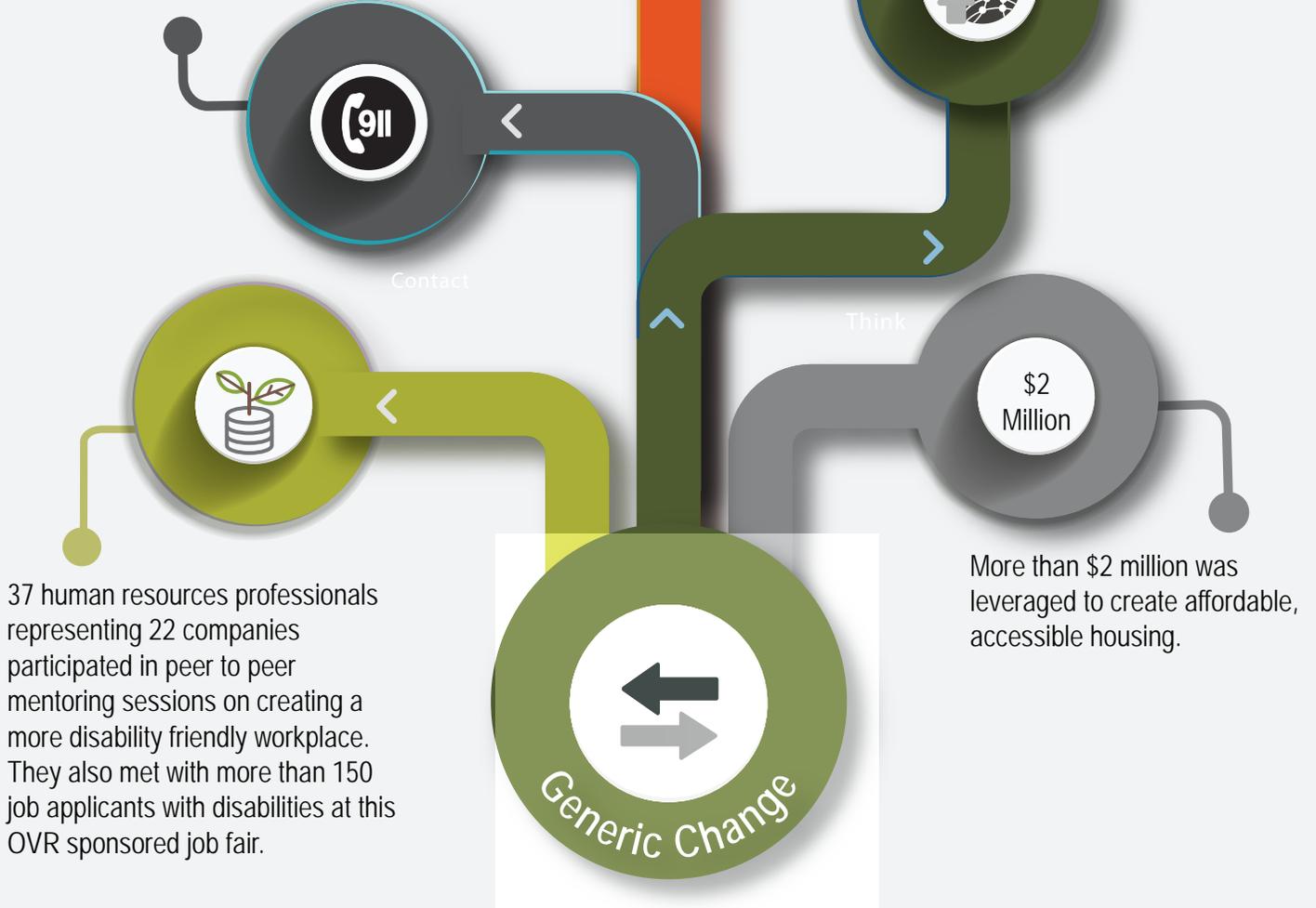


## Additional Generic Change Highlights

More than 50 accessibility site surveys were conducted at recreational, health care, governmental, and community facilities in Pennsylvania. The information from the surveys helped to leverage almost \$1 million to complete accessibility improvements to the properties.

Trainings were held in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh and Philadelphia for emergency managers, people with disabilities, and family members on Emergency Preparedness.

Three webinars were presented on Community Board Inclusion. Part 1—Considering Individuals with Disabilities as Members of Your Board of Directors; Part 2—How to Accommodate Individuals with Disabilities on Your Board of Directors; Part 3—Creating a Successful Group Culture on Your Board of Directors.



37 human resources professionals representing 22 companies participated in peer to peer mentoring sessions on creating a more disability friendly workplace. They also met with more than 150 job applicants with disabilities at this OVR sponsored job fair.

More than \$2 million was leveraged to create affordable, accessible housing.

# Focus: Stigma

**Goal: The Council endeavors to change the negative societal impact that occurs for people with disabilities as a result of social stigmas, and increase public recognition that disability is a natural part of the human experience, and is just one aspect of human diversity.**

## Project Highlight—Changing the Cultural Context within Schools

The objective: To carry out a series of activities that focus on coalition building and changing the cultural context within schools regarding inclusive education.

Roundtable discussions and community forums were held by an advisory committee to identify topics for trainings and workshops to affect systems change for inclusive education. These activities resulted in:

- The expansion of the Parent Consultant Network, which is a group of informed and supported parent experts who support other parents of children with disabilities, and provide training and technical assistance to schools and universities.
- An IEP Clinic Series for Parent and Professional Assistance, which assists with goal writing, post-secondary transition, person-centered planning, dispute resolution, assistive

technology, inclusion, positive behavior supports, and more.

- Inclusion conferences to help train leaders within underserved communities who are willing to act as cultural brokers, and who can extend their influence and trust to resident families of children with disabilities. These may be religious leaders, neighborhood business leaders, neighborhood elders and others.



### Additional Stigma Highlights



18

The History of Oppression project conducted 18 interviews with key human service leaders.

12

12 display panels chronicling the history of Pennhurst and the oppression of the people there.

300

300 student hours have been logged on preservation work at Elwyn and the State Archives.

# Pennsylvania Developmental Disabilities Council Members & Staff

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*Council Membership as of July 15, 2016*



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