



2019

**SIGN RESEARCH FOUNDATION
2019 ANNUAL REPORT**

Developing thriving, safe and vibrant communities through **SIGN RESEARCH AND EDUCATION.**





THIS YEAR'S SUCCESSES

The Sign Research Foundation (SRF) had a very successful and productive 2019. With your help, we published five new research projects on topics such as illumination, on-premise regulations, and an updated edition of a model sign ordinance.

In 2019, SRF introduced an innovative new method to demonstrate the value of SRF research, simulating real-world scenarios faced by the sign industry. This modernization allows SRF to further our education efforts and provide tangible results to the industry.

Bringing sign industry communities together to collaboratively find solutions was the highlight of the restructured SRF Annual Conference (formerly known as NSREC) in 2019. For years this has been an essential cornerstone event for SRF. Adopting a new structure for 2019 resulted in several new revenue streams, greater audience engagement, and diversity in attendees.

Lastly, SRF began partnering with the International Sign Association on *Planning for Sign Code Success™* workshops. This expanded our reach to the planning community and enabled us to offer our valuable resources to communities across the country.



TO OUR SRF FRIENDS AND COMMUNITY,

In 2019 the Sign Research Foundation continued to grow in ways that we could not have predicted. SRF completed and published five new research projects and two new research grants were awarded for 2020-2021. In addition, we developed new educational toolkits that were rolled out throughout the year and provided our community with actionable tools to use for business acquisition.

The 2019 SRF Annual Conference that occurred in conjunction with ISA Sign Expo® in Las Vegas was a resounding success. We hosted 50 planners, in a two day format, that provided a platform for education, insight and industry networking.

It is my fourth year on the SRF Board of Trustees and I have seen the foundation transform into the relevant and recognizable organization that it is today. The Sign Research Foundation empowers communities by supplying academic research on vibrant and effective sign strategies, systems, and codes.

I think that this is a time to reflect on our mission and understand that while our world has changed, we too are adapting as a member of our community to advance our cities, businesses and urban identities.

We are no longer merely informing or educating, we are using sign research to develop thriving, safe, and vibrant communities all over the country.

With your help and your support I am confident that we will empower even more communities in ways that may not have been realized possible. But nothing we do would be possible without YOU! It is clear that we would not be where we are without a community like you to provide financial and personal support.

On behalf of the Sign Research Foundation's Board of Trustees, thank you!



Chairman of the Board



TED KIPER
Chairman of the Board

ENGAGING THE PLANNING COMMUNITY



In 2019, the Sign Research Foundation worked with International Sign Association (ISA) to produce *Planning for Sign Code Success™* workshops, which educated more than 350 planners over the course of the year. Events were held in Florida, California, Nevada and more.

Planning for Sign Code Success™ workshops help local officials learn the hows and whys of sign construction, best practices in developing sign regulations, how to navigate ramifications from the *Reed v. Town of Gilbert* decision, how to treat electronic signs, and local sign code perspectives—all while earning CM credits, expanding their knowledge, and advancing their careers!

At the 2019 American Planning Association conference in San Francisco, CA, ISA and SRF put on a condensed version of their *Planning for Sign Code Success™* workshop which resulted in over 250 attendees. There were modules presented on the *Reed vs. Town of Gilbert* Supreme Court case, electronic messaging centers (EMCs), regulations that encourage creative sign design, and the future of smart signs and smart cities.

The Planning for Sign Code Success™ workshop at APA 2019 had 250+ attendees and speakers included.

Mark White - *Reed and Beyond*

Deacon Wardlow— *Finding Common Ground (EMCs)*

Linda Edwards – *Regulations that Encourage Creative Sign Design*

Jason Morrison – *Smart Cities/Smart Signs*



SRF, along with ISA Advocacy is developing a new digital learning course for the *Planning for Sign Code Success™* workshops.

INNOVATING

RESEARCH TRAINING METHOD INTRODUCED:

In 2019, SRF began a new method of instruction focused on empowering the sign industry through hands-on training on how to use SRF research to attract new clients and influence sign regulators. SRF also started training ISA and Affiliate Boards and Executive Directors to allow them to train their members, employees, customers, and more.

The new training method used existing research to show various audiences how to apply that research to real world situations. SRF created a variety of scenarios in which their audience could potentially find themselves. Then, SRF would use a relevant piece of SRF research to pinpoint the key information within the report that would help the audience in their scenario.

1,300+

The number of individuals SRF trained utilizing this new experimental learning method over the course of 2019.



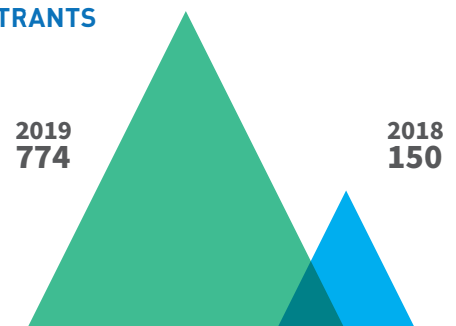
EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SIGN INFLUENCERS

SRF made the strategic decision to offer individual SRF branded sessions throughout the SRF Annual Conference (co-located with ISA Sign Expo®) rather than a full day workshop. The goal was to increase revenue and attendance through this effort. In 2018, we earned \$10,700 in revenue and had 150 registrants. In 2019, SRF earned \$26,564 in revenue with 774 registrants, a 416-percent increase in attendees and 148-percent increase in revenue.

REVENUE



REGISTRANTS



This conference was really different for me being that I only attend Planning Conferences; however, I thoroughly enjoyed the roundtable discussions and engaging with sign experts. I work for a smaller city so to be able to sit down and discuss issues that I face in my community with peers from cities similar to mine was amazing.”

Ryan Sellers
City Planner,
City of Newton, KS



This was an excellent program and really helped regulators understand the industries perspective with regard to signage regulations and restrictions.”

William Warner
Town Planner,
Town of Haddam, CT

SRF ANNUAL CONFERENCE FEEDBACK



It was an eye opening event, that bridges sign code enforcers and the actual sign manufacturers or stakeholders to sit down and discuss how they can work together as a team, thereby eliminating any tension that is usually exist between city officials and sign contractors. The topics discussed were very practical and helped scholars to think of future planning initiatives due to the ever changing technological world we live in.”

Leonard Mantey
Director of Planning,
City of Nacogoches, TX

EMPOWERING DIVERSE PARTICIPATION THROUGH SCHOLARSHIPS

SRF offered scholarships to 50 urban planners and graduate students to the SRF Annual Conference at ISA Sign Expo®, where they learned about the importance of effective signage. Candidates were carefully selected to represent a wide swathe of communities and with different types of code issues.

HANNAH BLEAM

Planner III - Signs Supervisor, City of Phoenix, AZ

“The SRF program provided me with a better understanding of all the functions from the sign perspective and how communities and the sign industry can better work together to improve sign codes and encourage creative signs.”



AARON SORRELL

Owner, Community Planning Insights, Dayton, OH

“The SRF Scholars Program provided me the opportunity to better understand signage from the industry's perspective including designers, fabricators and installers. This newly gained perspective will definitely impact how I design and write sign codes in the future.”



DEVELOPING RESEARCH TO IMPROVE COMMUNITIES

Research is at the heart of the mission of the Sign Research Foundation. SRF strives to forge impactful relationships with top-tier universities and credentialed professors who understand the importance of signage to the vibrancy of communities. These partnerships led to the development of peer-reviewed research that is used every day to educate planners, urban developers, and sign companies. Additionally, the International Sign Association uses SRF research consistently in its work to ensure reasonable sign codes and regulations.

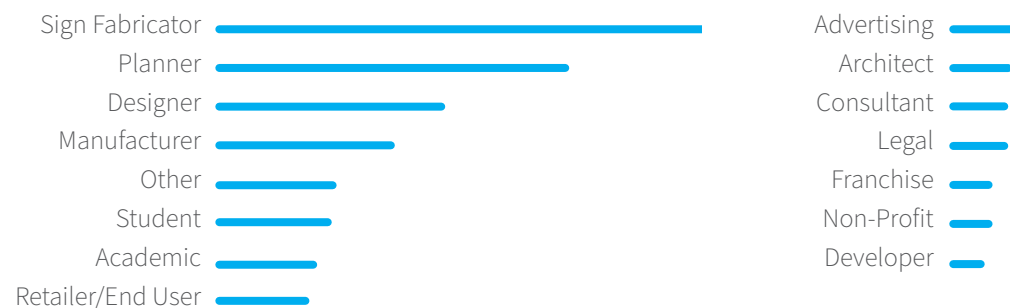
SRF HAD OVER 700 RESEARCH DOWNLOADS IN 2019.

In 2019, SRF switched to an innovative data collection model that allowed for more insight into who is using SRF research and how it is being used. This insight will allow SRF to continue producing high quality research that is further tailored to its most engaged audiences, and direct it's research to the topics most needed by the industry and planners.

The top downloaded research pieces covered topics such as consumer perceptions, sign design, wayfinding, and sign regulation.

Research Report	2019
1. Consumer Perceptions of Retail Signage – Executive Summary	99
2. Arts & Science of Sign Design	86
3. Economic Value of On-Premise Signage – Executive Summary	85
4. Arts & Science of Sign Design – Executive Summary	79
5. Urban Wayfinding Planning and Implementation Manual – Executive Summary	69
6. Typography, Placemaking, and Signs	68
7. Retail Wayfinding Best Practices – Executive Summary	63
8. Consumer Perceptions of Retail Signage: 100,000 Shoppers Can't Be Wrong	58
9. Best Practices in Regulating Temporary Signs – Executive Summary	57
10. A Framework for On-Premise Sign Regulation	54

With the new model, SRF is able to understand the professions of the various individuals who downloaded our research in 2019.



LEARNING

HOW SIGN COMPANIES USE SRF RESEARCH

Customer Acquisition



Consumer Perceptions of Signage



Retail Signage ROI



Economic Value of Signage



Retail Wayfinding



Typography & Placemaking



Urban Wayfinding Manual

Employee Onboarding



Illuminated Sign Conspicuity



Art & Science of Sign Design



Digital Wayfinding Trends



Wayfinding Models in Healthcare



Energy Efficiency of Illuminated Signage

Planner Education



Temporary Sign Best Practices



SRF Model Sign Code



Traffic Safety & Digital Signs



Developing a Sign Code



Profiles of Sign Regulations in Multiple Communities



Signs & the Downtown Experience

REFINING THE RESEARCH GRANT SELECTION PROCESS

DRIVERS OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

The SRF Research Committee is comprised of 17 volunteer leaders, ensuring representation from sign suppliers, sign companies, design firms, engineering consultancies, chain stores, airports, and city planning departments. The process of selecting projects for funding is designed to best serve the immediate needs of our stakeholders.

Each request for funding is presented to the Research Committee for review, evaluation, discussion, and prioritization.

STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH FOR TOPICS AND FOCUS

SRF thoroughly examines all potential research projects using data collected from stakeholder surveys. The information is evaluated within the macro-environment of external factors like regulatory changes, safety issues, and urban and retail trends.

Sign professionals say that these six training areas are necessary for success.

1. Educating sign code officials on effective regulations
2. Encouraging collaboration between architects and designers
3. Educating/onboarding new employees
4. Educating customers on the ROI of signage
5. Educating city managers about wayfinding and urban identity
6. Understanding emerging trends in technology and materials

According to over 1,000 planners and sign code officials, these are their top 10 most challenging issues.

1. Incorporating digital signage into an existing regulation
2. Balancing the needs of businesses with community aesthetics
3. Using digital wayfinding systems effectively
4. Creating wayfinding plans, including pedestrian, government, directional, vehicular and trails
5. Understanding legal issues for sign codes
6. Writing better and simpler sign codes
7. Incentivizing creative designs within the code approval process
8. Allowing flexibility for new sign materials and technology within sign codes
9. Learning about trends and standards in brightness and illumination
10. Financing new signage and wayfinding

SRF REVENUE

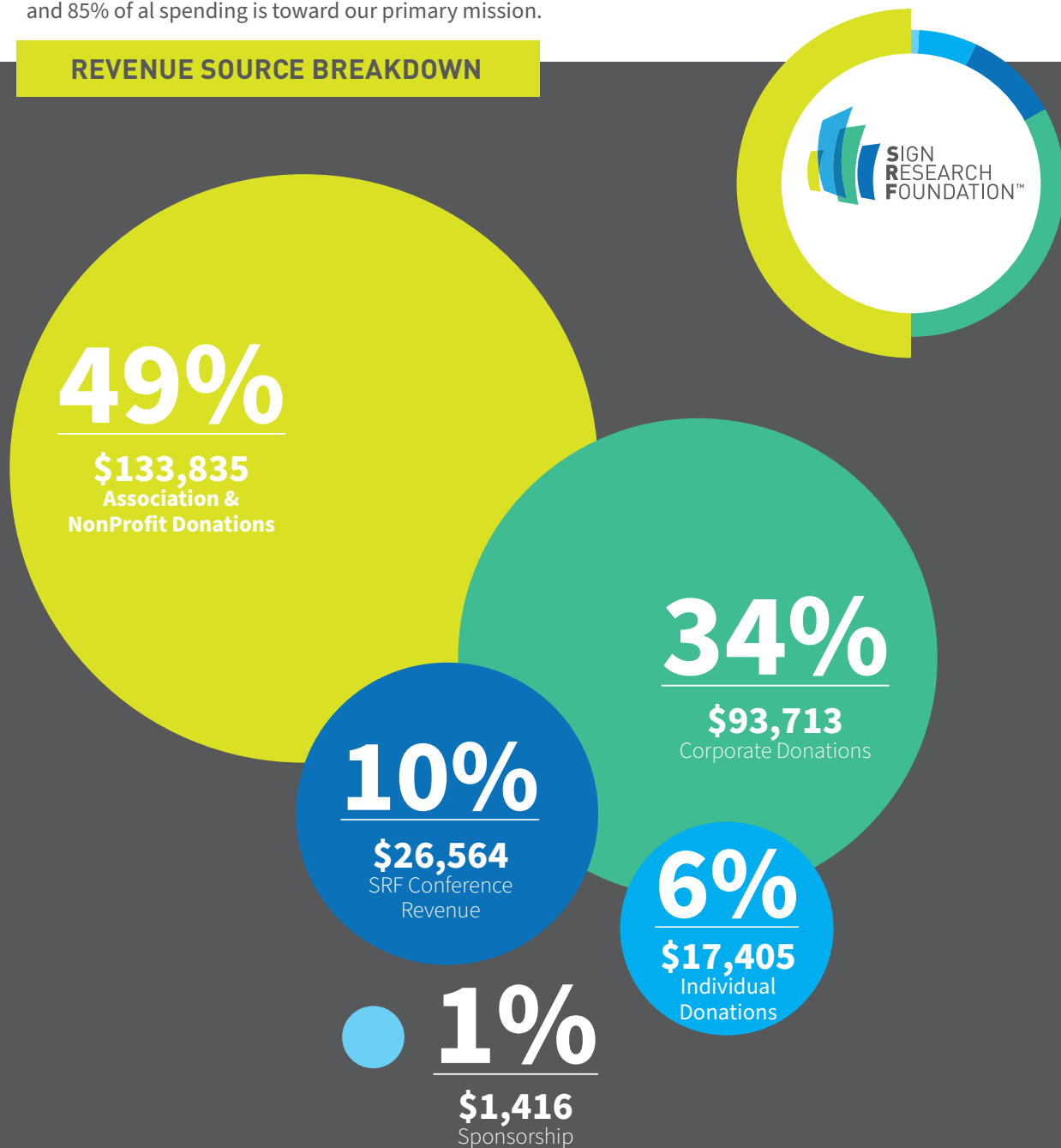
BREAKDOWN

DONATE

Take part in empowering communities. Donate now at givetosrf.org.

SRF has made a commitment to ensure that your donations are channeled to research and education that elevates and improves the sign industry. We hope to soon be able to use any earned profits towards operations and overhead, while keeping individual and corporate contributions for new research and training programs. Until we reach that point, SRF carefully scrutinizes every dollar spent and 85% of all spending is toward our primary mission.

REVENUE SOURCE BREAKDOWN



SUPPORT SRF TODAY:

DONATE

Help SRF empower communities. Donate today at givetosrf.org.

CORPORATE DONATIONS

Help double or triple your donation: ask your employer if they will match your gift or consider being the one to make a match.

MATCHING GRANT DONATIONS

Sponsor a matching grant and inspire others to give, or even increase their giving, knowing their donation will make a greater impact.

MONTHLY DONATIONS

Contribute on a monthly basis to SRF for the funding of research and hosting events.

PLANNED GIVING DONATIONS

Remember SRF in your will or as a beneficiary of investments/insurance. Why give more money to the IRS when you can leave a gift to SRF?

SPONSORSHIPS

Show your support at SRF events through sponsorships.



VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES

1. APPLY FOR A LEADERSHIP POSITION
2. JOIN ONE OF OUR RESEARCH ADVISORY PANELS
3. BECOME ONE OF OUR SPEAKERS

2019 SIGN RESEARCH FOUNDATION BOARD OF TRUSTEES

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