



SIGN RESEARCH FOUNDATION 2018 ANNUAL REPORT

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



LOOKING BACK

In 2018, 1,145 critical influencers, including planners, architects, designers and downtown officials, were educated through 10 events, including:

Planning for Sign Code Success™ (PSCS) — 639

National Sign Research & Education Conference (NSREC) — 150

SRF Webinars — 356

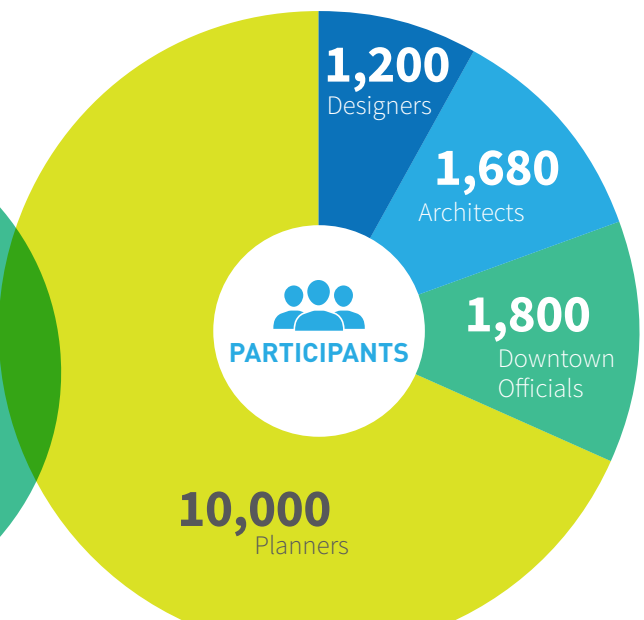
“SRF was outstanding in the way they brought design professionals from many fields together and showed each of us how we can all work together to design signs and sign ordinances that promote the public good.”

KEVIN O'BRIEN, AICP
Planner
City of Rahway, NJ

“The Sign Research Foundation is a critical resource for anyone who wants their signage and placemaking tools to be more effective.”

JESSICA R. FINCH
Art Program Manager
Boston Children's Hospital

SRF EVENT PARTICIPANTS | 2013–2018



82%

of donations went toward research and education

\$115,000

in donations received to conduct research and educate planners across the nation

5,379

research reports downloaded in 2018 (50% more than in 2017)

TOP FOUR MOST DOWNLOADED REPORTS

1. Consumer Perceptions in Retail Signage (aka 100,000 Shoppers Can't Be Wrong)
2. Arts & Science of Sign Design
3. Typography, Placemaking and Signs
4. Economic Value of On-Premise Signage

Out of a total of **79** posted research studies



To our SRF friends and community,

As the Foundation continues to grow and flourish, we remain focused on the keys to success. First, we understand the importance of engaging the planning community across the country — people like former SRF Scholars Matt and Patricia who are responsible for crafting and regulating sign ordinances in Cincinnati and Tampa, respectively. Second, we must continue to produce unimpeachable research in order to educate the next generation of sign influencers.



JOHN YARGER
Chairman of the Board

In looking back over this past year, my last as Board Chairman, I cannot help but think about the amazing results that this focus has generated. Working with our SRF community, SRF has:

Partnered with over 18 universities on sign research and education within their curricula.

Published almost 80 reports on the value of signage, best practices, design, illumination, regulatory issues, placemaking and wayfinding.

Educated almost 15,000 influencers and decision makers on the value of signage within their practice.

Tripled attendance at our annual conference, NSREC, by co-locating with ISA International Sign Expo® and providing scholarships to planners, architects and designers.

Inspired hundreds of graduate students in construction, landscape architecture, design and planning to understand how signage fits into their discipline.

We have advanced hundreds of communities across the United States and Canada that have looked to the Sign Research Foundation for guidance. We have influenced multiple professional practice areas and thousands of individual minds.

We are no longer merely informing or educating, we are using sign research to develop thriving and vibrant communities all over North America through true engagement!

SRF had many successes in 2018 and many reasons to celebrate. SRF continues to grow our own community, and these successes in 2018 are as much a win for SRF as they are for each and every one of us.

With a clear focus, 2019 will reach even greater heights. 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 advisory support.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Yarger". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Chairman of the Board

ENGAGING THE PLANNING COMMUNITY



In 2018, the Sign Research Foundation worked with the International Sign Association (ISA) to produce ISA's Planning for Sign Code Success™ workshops, which educated more than 600 planners in the course of the year. Events were held in Allentown, PA; Orlando, FL; Denver, CO; Oklahoma City, OK; and Minneapolis, MN.

And nearly 200 planners attended ISA's panel presentation, "Sign Regulations That Encourage Creative Design," at the American Planning Association (APA National Planning) Conference in New Orleans on April 23, 2018. The session, moderated by James Carpentier, AICP, ISA's director of state and local government affairs, included planners from Gilbert, Tucson and Phoenix, AZ, and helped attendees learn innovative ways to regulate signs that contain elements of outstanding design.

WEBINAR TRAINING

Over the course of the year, the Sign Research Foundation presented four webinars on design, wayfinding, regulations and the value of signage. Almost 400 people attended these sessions. One of these webinars had 273 attendees and focused on a research report titled "Profiles of Sign Regulations in Multiple Environments." The webinar analyzed seven different community types and included perspectives from planners, consultants, designers and sign manufacturers. The speakers also explored trends in sign code development and attributes of effective sign ordinances across all community types and discussed the successful design elements unique to suburban communities, urban centers, historic districts and campuses.

FEEDBACK FOR THE TRAINING WAS WELL RECEIVED:

Would you recommend this webinar to others?

96% YES

Did this webinar deliver content that is relevant and that you will apply to your job?

100% YES

“Thank you for the presentation. I really enjoyed it. Great info and perspective.”

CAROL STAUFFER
Chester County Planning
Commission
Borough of West Chester, PA



EDUCATING THE NEXT GENERATION OF SIGN INFLUENCERS



NATIONAL SIGN RESEARCH & EDUCATION CONFERENCE (NSREC) 2018

MARCH 21, ORLANDO, FL | CO-LOCATED WITH ISA SIGN EXPO

Each year, the National Sign Research & Education Conference (NSREC) brings top-tier academics, graduate students, and professionals in urban planning, architecture and design, as well as sign company professionals, together to delve into the science of sign design, conspicuity and placement.

In 2018, SRF welcomed 150 people from multi-disciplinary backgrounds and diverse professional practices, including the 50 students and planners who were accepted into our 2018 SRF Scholars Program.

Industry experts on wayfinding, design and urban planning shared perspectives on new technologies and the integration of digital signage into urban environments. Presentations detailed city and community signage projects that succeeded due to complex collaborative efforts between city planners, architects, designers and more. And global case studies demonstrated urban vibrancy developed with unique sign regulations, while roundtable discussions encouraged various types of community planners to work together and brainstorm ideas for one central scenario, namely how autonomous cars may change signage and wayfinding.

“It’s encouraging to see the unique policy strategies undertaken by cities to enable signage that meets local communities’ visions. The multitude of these policy strategies ignited my creativity when I returned to the office for projects in progress.”

DAUNTE RUSHTON

Senior Development Project Coordinator
City of Dallas, TX

New for NSREC in 2019: Attendees have the opportunity to select individual sessions rather than register for a full-day conference. Additionally, two offsite tours to the Neon Sign Museum sold out.

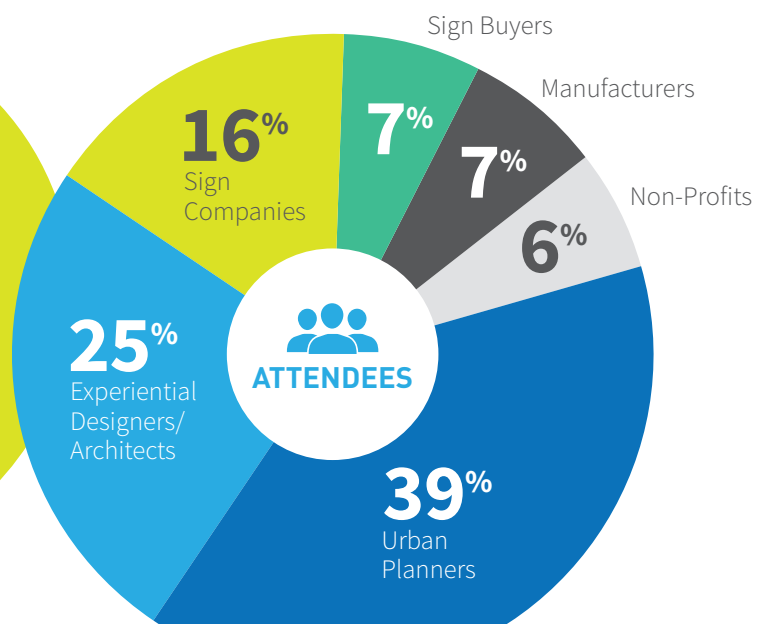


LEARN MORE AT NSREC.ORG

“I took away from the NSREC meetings additional information on the viewpoints of sign industry reps on the importance of proper signage and additional information on the revised signage regulations in my city’s zoning ordinance.”

CHRISHAUN SMITH

Urban Planner
City of Alexandria, VA



SEVEN OF THE SRF SCHOLARS WERE SO ENERGIZED BY THE EXPERIENCE THAT THEY ARE NOW VOLUNTEER LEADERS FOR SRF — SERVING ON COMMITTEES AND THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES!

KYLE SHIEL
Senior Planner
Town of Manchester, CT



JONATHAN BUSH

Senior Urban Planner, Prince George's County Planning Dept., MD

“The SRF Scholars Program has been a tremendous benefit to my career. I am responsible for evaluating conformance of urban design cases with an emphasis on site plans and other design-driven applications for major residential and mixed-use projects. A portion of my review specifically deals with signage as it relates to parking, loading, building-mounted and freestanding signs.

The SRF Scholars Program provided a wealth of knowledge that served as a precursor to my accepting this role. I am able to confidently draft reports, collaborate with my permit team colleagues, present to regulatory bodies and work with developers to provide signage equal to or better than the current Code of Ordinances.

The conference allowed me to see best practices from tenured experts around the country and the various methods used to assist with the review and permitting process. Having this knowledge ensures that all parties involved, including those affected by the signage, are not adversely impacted.”



2018 SRF SCHOLARS



DEVELOPING RESEARCH TO IMPROVE COMMUNITIES

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

IT WAS AN IMPRESSIVE 2018, WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF:



9 Academic
Research Reports



4 Executive Summaries
of Key Research



79 Posted
Research Studies

NEW REPORTS INCLUDE:

Best Practices in Developing Sign Regulations
Business Signage & Placemaking
Digital Wayfinding Trends: Lessons Learned from
Museums, Healthcare and Transit Experiences
Energy Usage & Efficiency of Model Illuminated Signs
Illuminated Sign Conspicuity: What Factors Make a
Sign Noticeable and Legible?

Profiles of Sign Regulations in Multiple Communities
and Environments
SRF Model Sign Code
Urban Wayfinding Planning & Implementation Manual
Wayfinding Management: Models & Methods in
Healthcare Environments

DATA YOU CAN USE:

61%

of American consumers have
driven by and failed to find a
business because the sign was
too small or unclear.

Consumer Perceptions of Signage

60%

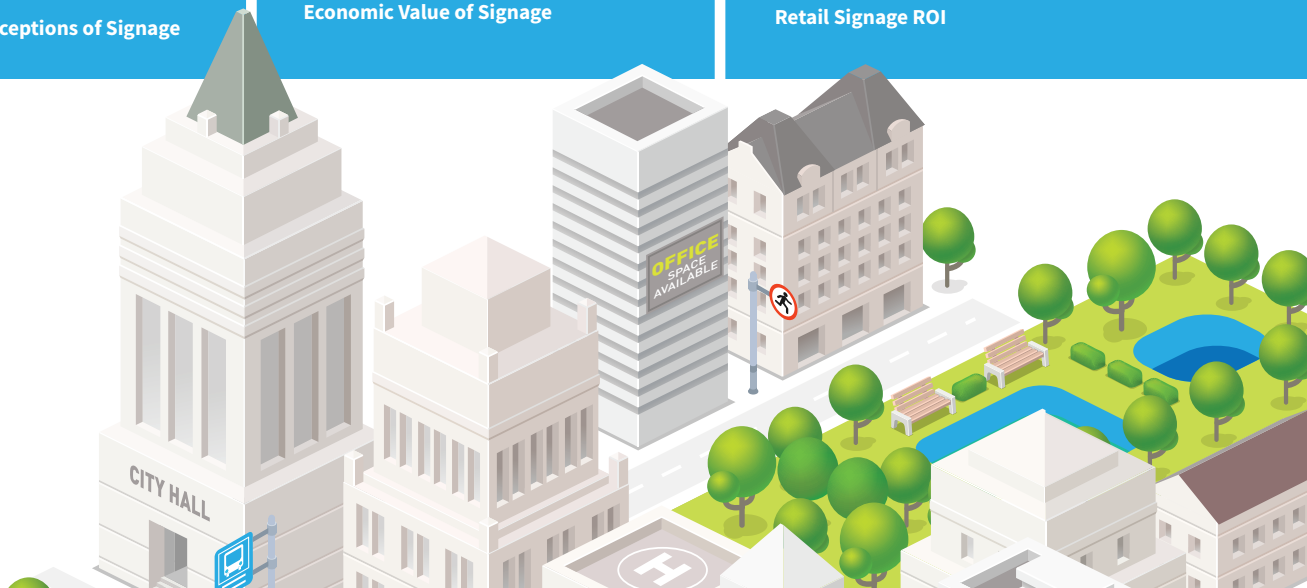
of businesses reported average
sales increases of 10% or more by
adding or updating their signs.

Economic Value of Signage

RETAIL

companies that focus on store
design increase in value at a much
faster rate than other companies.

Retail Signage ROI



HOW DO SIGN COMPANIES USE SRF RESEARCH?

SIGN COMPANIES USE SRF RESEARCH TO ACCOMPLISH THREE GOALS:

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 has 12 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. The goal is to select six to eight projects that will move forward to the next step of the research process.

STAKEHOLDER RESEARCH FOR TOPICS AND FOCUS

SRF examines all potential research projects using data collected from stakeholder surveys, and evaluates them within the macro-environment of regulatory changes, safety issues, and urban and retail trends.

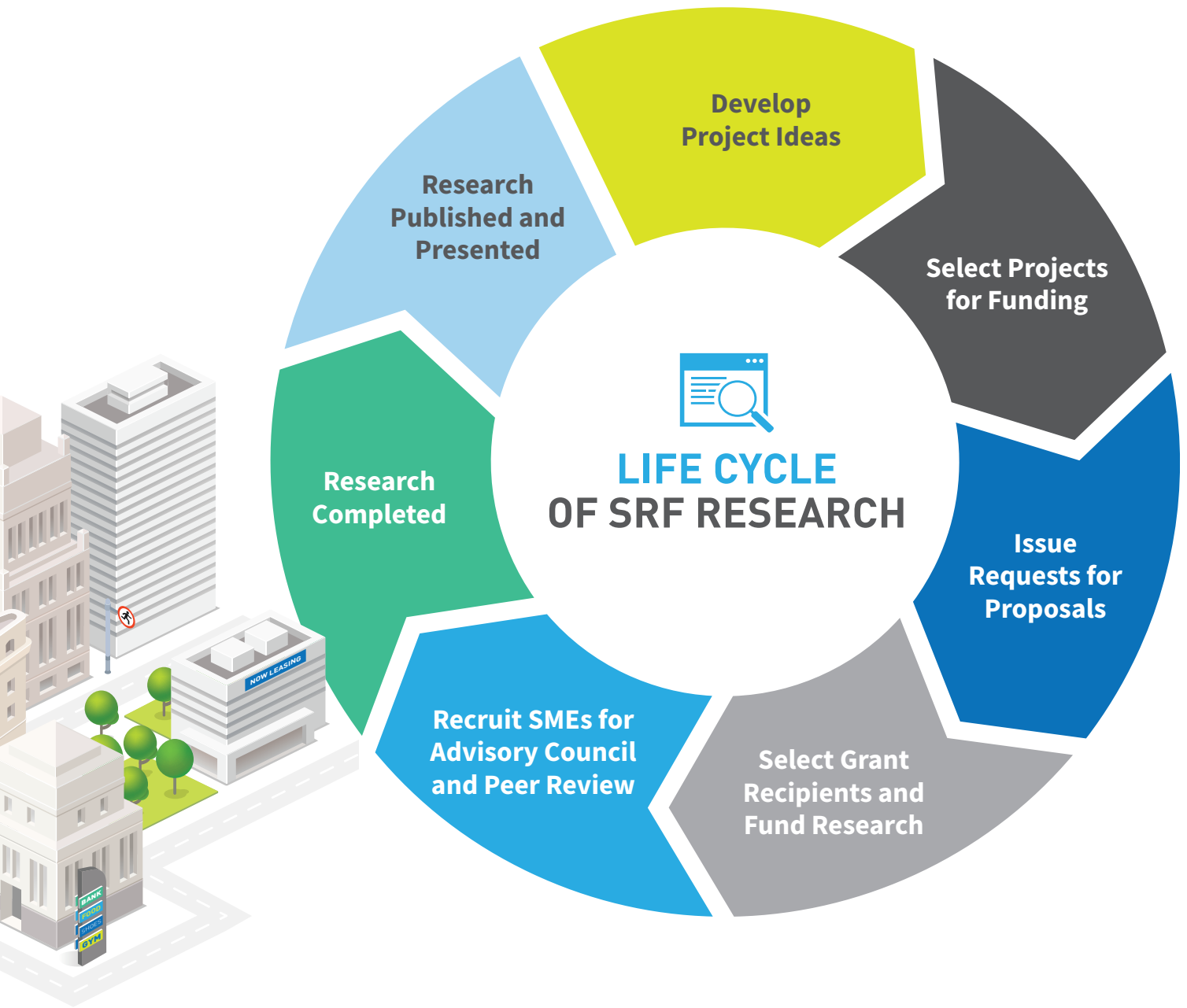
Through surveys, 350 sign industry professionals prioritized the research and education they need to succeed.

- 1 Educating sign code officials on effective regulations
- 2 Encouraging collaboration with 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 future trends in technology and materials

Understanding that educating sign code officials is a top priority, SRF then surveyed 478 urban planners and sign code officials to find out what sign-related issues are the most challenging.

- 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





A NEW REPOSITORY FOR SRF RESEARCH AND INFORMATION:

SRF redesigned the research repository on our website, allowing our thousands of users to effectively search and navigate the breadth of data in our reports. The new site has become a bookmarked destination for government officials, city planners, architects, designers, sign companies and product manufacturers.

The top research downloads in 2018 covered the topics of sign design, regulation, consumer behavior and the economic benefit of signage.



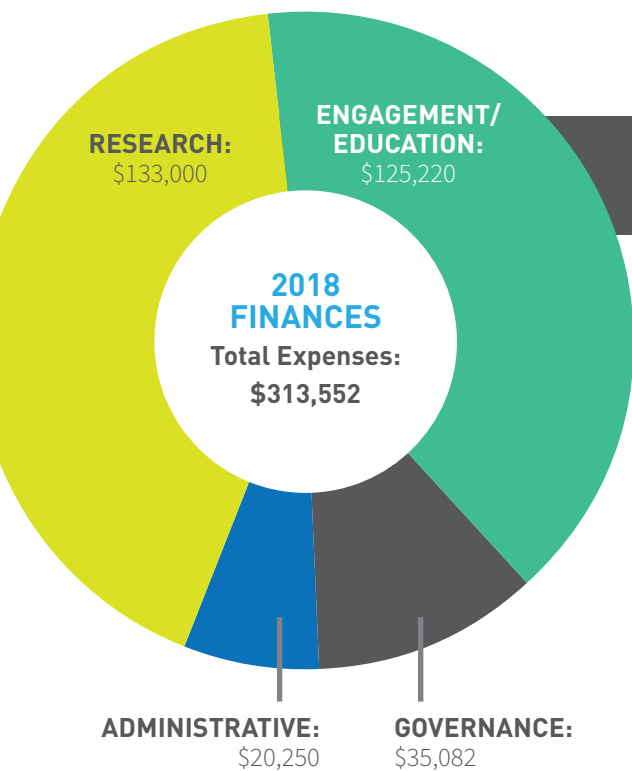
DOWNLOAD SRF RESEARCH AT [SIGNRESEARCH.ORG](https://signresearch.org).

EARNING SUPPORT FOR THESE EFFORTS

DONATE

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

- 1 Communities are thriving because they have sign codes that support better navigation, strong local businesses and useful wayfinding. In 2019, SRF will allocate over \$130,000 to fund unbiased, evidence-based research on effective sign strategies and systems.
- 2 Effective sign codes and regulations that help business growth are created by educated planners and urban developers. In 2019, SRF will allocate \$125,000 to outreach that shifts the mindset of top planners and developers — almost 1,200 were educated in 2018 alone!
- 3 Graduate students need to better understand the impact of signs within their field of study — whether it be architecture, design or urban planning. We provide 8–10 research grants to academics every year, proactively engaging students on the importance of signage.



82% of every dollar you donate goes to developing essential research and education on signage.

HERE'S HOW YOU CAN SUPPORT SRF TODAY:

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 drive others to give, or even increase their giving, knowing their donation will make a greater impact.

MONTHLY DONATIONS — Give SRF a solid baseline income for funding research and hosting events.

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

SPONSORSHIPS — Support specific SRF events through sponsorships.

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Sapna Budev
Executive Director,
Sign Research Foundation

WELCOME

SRF would like to welcome two new individuals who will join the Sign Research Foundation's Board of Trustees in 2019.



Keith Davis, Technical Design Director, KR Design

"As a designer with one foot in 'both camps' between design and manufacturing, I feel my unique perspective helps bridge a gap and that I augment any team's dynamic as a contributing member."



Max Fulton, President and CEO, Gordon Signs

"I believe my diverse background in operational improvement and running the oldest sign company in America for the last four years will provide a unique perspective to the SRF board. I have also been working with local municipalities on urban renewal projects, and I want to explore research opportunities to support these initiatives."

THANK YOU

2018 CHAMPION DONORS



2018 DONORS

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2018 CONTRIBUTING DONORS

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