# MAKING PROGRESS One Courageous Conversation at a Time



#### What is DEI?

DEI stands for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. DEI is an initiative created to build a sustainable work environment that is equitable and works for a diverse population.

# DEI at SRF

SRF cultivates a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where all individuals feel respected, acknowledged, and empowered to bring their authentic selves to work. Our diversity drives our innovation; our inclusivity drives our approach.

#### **Action-Oriented Committee**

- Works toward mitigating and ending prejudice within our workplace and greater communities
- Bring a wide-range of experiences from personal and professional lives

#### Value-Driven Goals

- Build a staff representative of the communities we serve through active recruiting and engagement
- Include and engage

training for leadership

2019

## Timeline

2018

SRF DEI

Committee

formed

**Spring 2021** – SRF DEI Plan **Year 2021** – SRF establishes formal effort to support diverse businesses and project partners



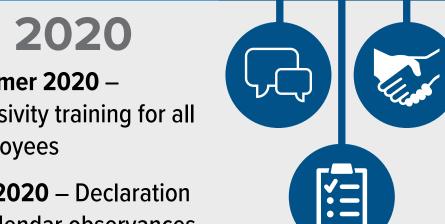
Winter 2021 – First Courageous

**Conversation session** 

2020



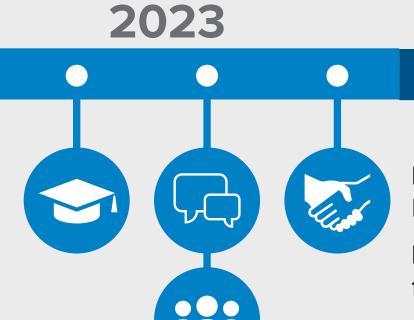








2024



Winter 2023 - Marie Cote & Adrian Potter complete Inclusive Workplaces Cohort Fall/Winter 2023 – Increased university

outreach efforts Fall 2023 – Second multicultural lunch **Year 2023** – Ongoing Courageous Conversations and calendar observance **February 2024** – SRF hosted the COMTO MN Black

**February 2024** – SRF staff presented on gender equity for SWE (Society of Women Engineers) MN State Mankato July 2024 – SRF participated in the Hopkins Freedom School summer event exposing students to the work we do in the community

October 2024 - SRF participated in a SHPE (Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers) event

November 2024 – SRF hosted a BBBS Big Explorer event to expose school-aged kids to the engineering and planning work we do

Fall 2024 – DEI questions included as part of our annual

**Year 2024** – Ongoing calendar observances

Year 2025 – Ongoing **Courageous Conversations** and calendar observances

July 2025 – Update to SRF's **DEI Plan and Committee's** Vision

2022

**Courageous Conversations and** 

**Summer 2022** – Internship

Minneapolis Step Up program

2025

to bring diverse youth to the

Year 2022 – Ongoing

calendar observances

position through the

workforce

**Year 2025** – Everyday DEI

# SRF DEI Courageous Conversations

## Why the Name "Courageous Conversations"

- Borrowed from education (looking outside the transportation industry)
- It's easy to go with the flow but takes courage to talk about equity and oppression in our highly-politicized world
- The news cycle impacts us as individuals and as employees - staff demand a space to ask questions and share their perceptions and experiences without judgement
- Events include small group discussions to process presentation materials

## The Making of Courageous Conversations



Touches on the work we do and decisions we make provides a lens to look at deeper subjects together

Presentation – may be a live

Sometimes requires reading

or viewing beforehand

Small group discussions

speaker or a video



Unrecorded so people feel open to talk and learn



Judgment-free zone to promote dialogue



Provide further resources and

# **Series of Courageous Conversations**

SRF's Courageous Conversations started in 2021 out of a desire to foster discussions about DEI in the workplace. Our company strives to create an environment where we celebrate differences and foster change to long-held beliefs and biases. Sparking transformation demands a level of honest dialogue that may make people uncomfortable. But to stand on a platform of shared understanding, we must be willing to have courageous conversations that change hearts and minds.

#### Jim Crow of the North

- Participants watched PBS documentary beforehand
- Discussed racial covenants
- Mapping Prejudice Project
- Fair Housing Act Small and large group
- discussion Provided additional resources

Planning for

Disabilities

What is a disability?

suggestions

discussions

Visible vs. Invisible disabilities

Tips, considerations, and

Language DOs and DONTs

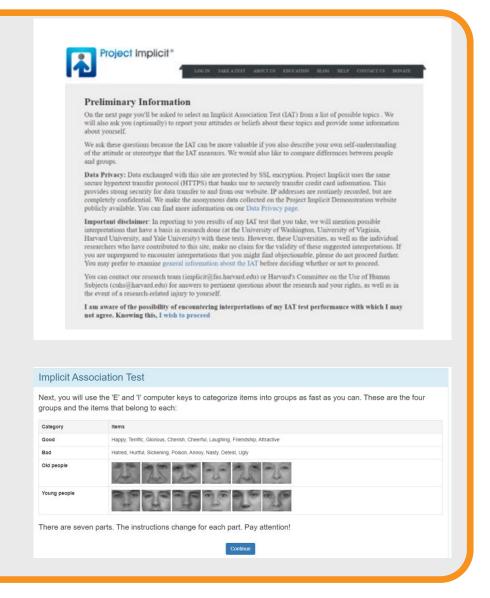
Small and large group



Race Restrictions Bar Thousands From Housing

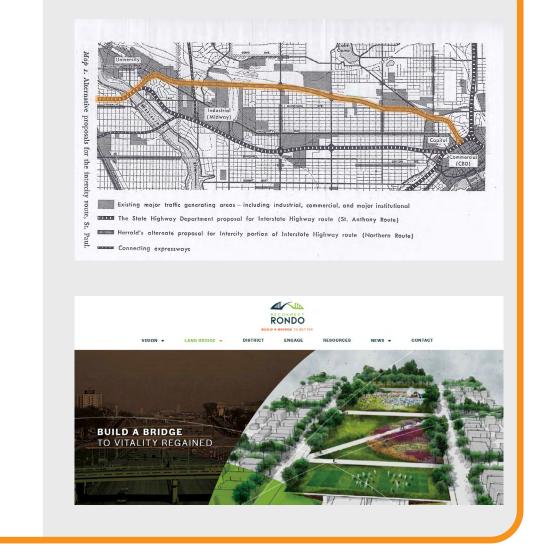
#### **Implicit Bias**

- Zoom based
- Participants took Project Implicit test and read a related article beforehand
- Small group discussions on gender and age bias
- Large group feedback
- Provided further resources



#### Rondo: Beyond the Pavement

- First hybrid session both in person and Zoom
- Ice breaker question
- Watched video together
- If you were in a decision-making role about alignments for I-94, what other information would you seek?
- Provided additional resources

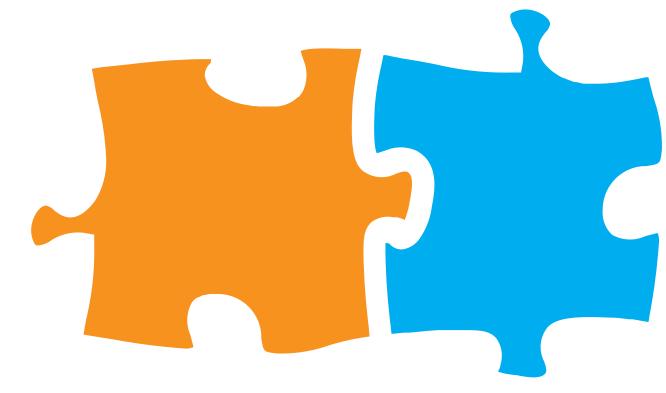


# Guided breakout discussions



Courageous

Conversations



# Insights

- Support from and attendance by leadership demonstrates company commitment to DEI
- Finding balance between background / high-level conversations and technical skills and knowledge
- Team effort committee members and subject matter experts
- Sometimes the dialogue is awkward, but that discomfort sparks growth and progress

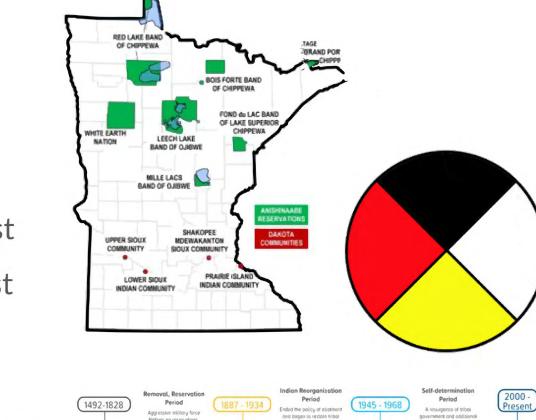


Learn more about SRF's DEI **Initiative** 

# **Tribal Nations**

Provided additional resources

- Land Acknowledgment
- Tribal Sovereignty
- Tribal Nations in the Midwest
- Building Relationships & Best Practices
- Breakout Questions
- Provided additional resources



Colonial Period
Colonial Service and Assimilation Period
Assimilation Period
Assimilation Period
Settless and tand within the fribes

1828-1887

Attlotment and Assimilation Period
Settless and tand within the receivations. Covers Act:
1934 - 1945

1934 - 1945

1968 - 2000

Termination Period
Termination Terminati

### **Equity in Transportation** Human Toll - The Story of I35W

- Equality vs Equity
- Video presentation on the human toll and destructive story of Hwy 35W

