



Senior Director

Woodside, California

SUMMARY

The Valhalla Foundation (Valhalla) works to drive measurable and meaningful improvement in outcomes that matter. Valhalla is the private foundation of [Scott Cook](#) and [Signe Ostby](#) who are committed to social impact in response to what they see as some of the most pressing challenges of our time.

At an exciting inflection point in its journey and positioned for significant growth, Valhalla seeks to build and further specialize leadership roles for increased impact. This newly created **Senior Director** role will lead and shape the [Environmental Innovation](#) and [Collaborative Philanthropy](#) portfolios through continued expansion and evolution. They will report to the Executive Director and work in close partnership with the ED, the Valhalla team, and with the Trustees.

Successful candidates will bring capacity to listen, learn, and develop well-articulated points of view on issues relevant to the work of the Foundation and a bold, candid leadership style that holds accountability for achievement of Valhalla's goals. They will demonstrate fierce curiosity, strong pattern recognition and analytical skills, and the ability to drive continuous learning and improvement toward measurable impact. They will be deeply interested in change through environmental innovation and the power of collaborative philanthropy.

ABOUT VALHALLA FOUNDATION

As proud signatories of [The Giving Pledge](#), Scott and Signe have committed over \$600 million toward social impact in recent years in response to urgent challenges, including: persistent educational disparities and inequity, the devastating impacts of climate change, and diseases whose causes and cures are not well understood.

Valhalla's lean grant-making team brings deep rigor, kindness, and intentionality to the work of driving measurable and meaningful improvement in outcomes that matter. The team and Trustees are driven by a laser focus on outcomes and their drivers, and the team brings an innovative and nimble approach to their work. The Foundation prioritizes both general operating and non-monetary support to many of its portfolio organizations, including leadership coaching, connection to other funders, goal setting and strategy assistance, and support for staffing and infrastructure as needed to scale impact. Valhalla also shares a strong commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion in the Foundation's culture and practices.

The five key issue areas that comprise Valhalla's main portfolio include: [early childhood development](#), [K-12 education](#), [data literacy](#), [environmental innovation](#), and [medical research and talent](#). Additionally, Valhalla is an active participant in [collaborative philanthropy](#) efforts through [The Audacious Project](#) and [Blue Meridian Partners](#). Valhalla has also made sizeable gifts to COVID relief and racial justice efforts in recent years.

ENVIRONMENTAL INNOVATION AND COLLABORATIVE PHILANTHROPY

The new Senior Director will shape the direction of two key portfolios - [Environmental Innovation](#) and [Collaborative Philanthropy](#) – which accounted for approximately \$80M of commitments last year. They will join a remarkably innovative, close-knit leadership team and enjoy an extraordinary opportunity to shape investments in solutions to persistent, urgent challenges we face as a global community.

Environmental Innovation: Valhalla’s goal is to reduce the damage that methane and greenhouse gas accelerants do to our climate and to reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from pollutants, particularly air pollutants. To this end, Valhalla funds efforts to reduce methane emissions, improve air quality, and improve climate-smart agriculture. In these areas, Valhalla has funded several of the [Environmental Defense Fund](#)’s efforts to improve the measurement of emissions and pollutants, identify their source, and catalyze action to remove or reduce those sources’ negative impact. In recent years, Valhalla has expanded its portfolio to support the work of [Woodwell Climate Research Center](#) and [At One Ventures](#), and there is enthusiasm to grow the portfolio further.

Collaborative Philanthropy: Valhalla invests in collaborative philanthropy platforms in order to invest more effectively and efficiently in innovative organizations and connect with other philanthropies to share learning. Valhalla has made grants to more than a dozen high potential organizations through the [Audacious Project](#) (including Waterford Upstart, One Acre Fund, and Thorn) and is also a General Partner in [Blue Meridian Partners](#). Going forward, there is enthusiasm to identify a handful of additional collaborative philanthropy platforms to invest in.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Through data-informed recommendations and open dialogue, the Senior Director will advance the desired results of the Foundation. They will shape the future direction and growth of the environmental innovation and collaborative philanthropy portfolios, in collaboration with the ED and Trustees. They will build on learning and innovation to date, and be responsible for the following:

Learning and Shaping Strategy: The Senior Director will identify and synthesize the most important data, insights, and learnings from portfolio organizations and across the environmental innovation and collaborative philanthropy portfolios and find opportunities to share them across the team and with the Trustees. Further, they will make recommendations for how to evolve the strategies in each portfolio based on these insights and lessons learned.

Driving Results with Portfolio Organizations: The Senior Director will lead the relationship with portfolio organizations – assessing their performance; understanding their challenges and opportunities; and – most importantly – influencing the decisions of leaders in ways that improve results.

Leading Diligence and Making Grant Recommendations: The Senior Director will lead diligence on new investment opportunities and reinvestments as new rounds of funding are raised. The Senior Director will present recommendations on whether to invest and why, the appropriate grant amount and structure, and the key risks associated with investment.

Field Leadership: As a representative of Valhalla in these two portfolios, the Senior Director will build and steward relationships with content experts, field leaders, and funders and influence these key stakeholders through collaboration, dialogue, and written communication.

CANDIDATE PROFILE

Strong candidates will bring capacity to listen, learn, and develop well-articulated points of view on issues relevant to the work of the Foundation and a bold, candid leadership style that holds accountability for achievement of Valhalla's goals. They will demonstrate boundless curiosity and a love of learning, strong pattern recognition and analytical skills, and the ability to drive continuous learning and improvement toward measurable impact. Technical and other content expertise related to environmental innovation and collaborative philanthropy are desirable but not required. While no one candidate will embody all the qualifications enumerated below, successful candidates will possess many of the following professional and personal abilities, attributes, and experiences:

Strategic Leadership and Coaching

- Proven track record of accelerating leaders' progress toward ambitious goals by identifying opportunities, challenges, and solutions, and influencing leaders' actions.
- Active listening and learning orientation, willingness to question assumptions and vet ideas with rigorous inquiry.
- Judgment to know when to take the lead and when to position, partner, or consult with the ED and/or Trustees in the course of the work.
- Ability to gather input, act on feedback, and make appropriate but potentially difficult recommendations.

Communication and Relationship Skills

- Superb written communication skills – articulating clear and succinct recommendations backed up by the most important data and rationale.
- Superb oral communication skills that compellingly present Valhalla's priorities to a range of constituents and stakeholders, including Trustees, in a manner that convinces and inspires.
- Capacity to effectively communicate, cultivate, and nurture relationships with a range of constituents and stakeholders.

Strong Analytical Skills and Sound Judgment

- Demonstrated ability to analyze data and research and appropriately assess impact, growth trajectory, financial sustainability, leadership and team strength, organizational capacity, and other key success factors of high-potential portfolio organizations.
- Ability to process new information quickly and make sound recommendations by synthesizing and deriving important insights and identifying strengths, weaknesses, and assumptions.

Personal Qualities and Characteristics

- Demonstrated passion for social impact.
- Ability to build trust, invest in relationships, and facilitate effective two-way feedback.
- Entrepreneurial approach that thrives in a fast-paced environment.
- Desire to be part of both high-level strategy and detail-oriented execution.
- Maturity and self-awareness to know when to lead and how to support the leadership of others.
- Respect for and support of the Trustees' vision and desired impact.

COMPENSATION

The Valhalla Foundation offers competitive salaries commensurate with experience and generous benefits. The salary range for this role currently starts at \$240,000.

TO APPLY

More information about **Valhalla Foundation** may be found at: www.valhalla.org

This search is being led by [Allison Kupfer Poteet](#), [Catherine Seneviratne](#), and [Sharon Gerstman](#) of [NPAG](#). Candidates may submit their cover letter, outlining their interest and qualifications, along with their resume via NPAG's [website](#).

Valhalla's operations are supported by Fox Hollow Ventures, Scott and Signe's family office. Valhalla staff are employees of Fox Hollow Ventures. The Senior Director will initially work remotely for as long as COVID-related realities make that necessary. Eventually, assuming a return to pre-COVID "normal," the full team will transition back to Valhalla's Woodside, CA office for in-person work with the option to work remotely at least two days per week – as early as April.

Fox Hollow Ventures is an equal opportunity employer. Valhalla Foundation is committed to building a diverse team that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.