



# Position Specification

**Valhalla Foundation**  
President

## Our Client

Valhalla Foundation (“Valhalla”) is the private foundation of Scott Cook (co-founder of Intuit) and Signe Ostby.

Valhalla’s ambition is to drive measurable and meaningful improvement in outcomes that matter for society and the planet, with a focus on the following five issue areas: [Early Childhood Development](#), [K-12 Education](#), [Data Science](#), [Environmental Innovation](#), and [Medical Research and Talent](#). Valhalla is also an active participant in collaborative philanthropy efforts such as The Audacious Project and Blue Meridian Partners.

In each of these areas, Valhalla applies a rigorous approach to grant-making in pursuit of the greatest impact. Valhalla conducts national searches to find the direct service, research, field-building, and policy organizations that can credibly make a difference in improving desired outcomes at large scale nationwide. It filters from hundreds of organizations to those most capable of driving meaningful results.

In addition to funding, Valhalla provides non-monetary assistance to its grantees to help them scale their impact. Examples include assistance with strategy development and measurement and evaluation, coaching on best practices in hiring and board development, connections to other funders, access to executive coaches to help leaders improve, and candid feedback and moral support.

Scott and Signe – the sole Trustees of Valhalla – are signatories of The Giving Pledge and are committed to “giving while living”. They are planning to give away the majority of their ~\$4B during their lifetimes. Giving has tripled over the past three years to ~\$150M/year – for a total of \$750M to date. Scott and Signe envision spending up to \$250M per year for the next ~10 years.

Valhalla’s team is comprised of former nonprofit founders and CEOs and multi-sectoral impact leaders who bring rigorous intellect along with humanity, humility, and joy to the work. There are currently nine people working at Valhalla, and a total of 12 FTEs including a Bridgespan team on retainer that primarily works to accelerate Valhalla’s sourcing and diligence efforts.

Valhalla’s operations are supported by Scott and Signe’s family office, Fox Hollow Ventures, which manages the Foundation’s assets.

Learn more at [www.valhalla.org](http://www.valhalla.org).

## The Opportunity to Drive Real Change

*Valhalla tackles major societal problems with bold goals.*

- In Early Childhood, Valhalla aims to dramatically improve Kindergarten readiness so that all U.S. children, and particularly low-income children and children of color, get a strong start in learning and life – because less than half of marginalized children today arrive at Kindergarten ready to learn.
- In K-12 Education, Valhalla aims to dramatically improve academic achievement and attainment, particularly for low-income students and students of color – because roughly two-thirds of U.S. 4<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders are not proficient in reading and math.
- In Data Science, Valhalla aims for all students to leave high school with the skills to extract truth from data – so that students can succeed in today's economy and civil society.
- In Environmental Innovation, Valhalla aims to stop emissions of greenhouse gas accelerants – and slow our planet's warming.
- In Medical Research, Valhalla aims to prevent and cure multiple sclerosis and related autoimmune diseases, and accelerate the pipeline for top research talent.

*Valhalla is comfortable entering fields that are early-stage*, where there aren't yet a critical mass of aligned funders, nonprofits, and/or policy-makers. This was the case seven years ago when Valhalla first began to focus on early childhood, methane emissions reduction, and the microbiome's effect on autoimmune disease, and it was the case when Valhalla first began to invest in Data Science two years ago.

*Valhalla believes that great results require great people.* To that end, Valhalla invests in growing leaders, both at Valhalla itself and in the fields in which Valhalla works. Valhalla works to attract great talent and then develop that talent to deliver outstanding results. Valhalla also works to build candid, trusting, supportive, and productive relationships with the portfolio leaders they back, and to provide non-monetary resources and coaching to portfolio leaders because this can matter as much as dollars in accelerating an organization's progress.

*Valhalla seeks to continuously learn and improve in service of greater impact.* They know that they have a lot to learn, and they seek to collaborate with and learn with and from others in the hard work of social change. They know that success requires persistence and intend to support efforts for decades. And they regularly measure the outcomes that the Foundation and its portfolio organizations achieve and reflect on what's working (and not working) and why.

*Valhalla embraces rigor and truth-seeking in decision-making based on facts, data, and analysis* – in order to make decisions that drive greater impact. They nurture and embrace differing perspectives to make better decisions, and they seek to recognize and mitigate bias.

*Valhalla values clear, concise, and direct written and oral communication.* They say what they think and invite others to do the same. They see writing as a tool for clarifying one's thinking, for driving good debate and decision-making, and for capturing institutional knowledge.

## The Role and Candidate Profile

The successful President will lead Valhalla's people and strategy to drive meaningful and measurable improvement in outcomes that matter for society and our planet. They will be a strategic thinker and doer; they will attract great talent and develop, inspire, and coach the team to achieve great results; they will be an expert influencer and a continuous learner; and they will base decisions on data and research and communicate in a compelling and fact-based manner.

Valhalla often pioneers in nascent arenas where the path to success is challenging and not yet clear. Thus, the President will be a strategic thinker and doer who catalyzes important insights that focus Valhalla on what is most important to driving improved outcomes for society. A systems thinker, the President will lead in understanding the root causes of the problems Valhalla is working to solve and developing sometimes novel paths to addressing them.

Valhalla succeeds only through its people. The President will attract great talent as Valhalla continues to grow and will develop people to do the best work of their lives. They will nurture a collaborative, inclusive, and joyful culture that drives sound, evidence-based decision-making, demonstrates empathy and respect for all people, fosters productive disagreement, invites diverse perspectives, and – ultimately – achieves outstanding results.

Valhalla has the opportunity to accelerate impact by learning from and influencing grantees, fellow philanthropists, and policy-makers. The President will influence others to act through their wisdom, leadership, and unquestioned integrity that earns others' trust and respect. They will also be an expert at learning from others.

Valhalla is rigorous in decision-making in order to invest where the impact will be greatest. The President will be a truth-seeking leader basing decisions on analysis of data and research, and they will communicate orally and in writing in a compelling and fact-based manner.

Valhalla holds itself accountable for improving outcomes for those it serves. The President will inspire, coach, and drive for outcome results, and they will lead in a way that focuses team time, dollars, and financial and operational systems on what is most important.

Over the next decade, Scott and Signe know their life trajectory will evolve to spending less of their time on the work of Valhalla. The President will bring a 10+ year horizon to their work at Valhalla and will earn trust so that Scott and Signe delight in continuing to transition authority to the President.

## **Commitment to Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion**

Valhalla is committed to hiring and developing a diverse team, and we encourage all interested candidates to apply. Valhalla centers diversity, equity, and inclusion in the decisions they make and in how they work together internally and with their grantees. This explicit DEI focus furthers their mission of driving measurable and meaningful improvements in outcomes that matter and specifically breaks the predictive power of race, gender, class, income, and other forms of marginalization.

## **Compensation and Location**

Valhalla has conducted a comprehensive external compensation study to develop transparent salary bands and promotion criteria for each role. The salary range for this role is \$506,000 to \$760,000 based on experience and performance. Valhalla also offers generous benefits. The President will work from Valhalla's Woodside, CA office in Silicon Valley three days/week with the option to work remotely for the remainder of the week when in-person collaboration is not required.

## **Contact**

### **Jamie Hechinger**

Russell Reynolds Associates  
1700 New York Avenue, NW  
Suite 400  
Washington, DC 20006-5208  
Direct: +1-202-654-7839  
Mobile: +1-202-821-8276  
[jamie.hechinger@russellreynolds.com](mailto:jamie.hechinger@russellreynolds.com)