



## OVERVIEW

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Valhalla Foundation (“Valhalla”) is the private foundation of Scott Cook (co-founder of Intuit) and Signe Ostby. Valhalla invests in and supports innovative organizations aligned with its mission to *drive measurable and meaningful improvement in outcomes that matter*.

In that spirit, four key issue areas comprise Valhalla’s main portfolio: [early childhood development](#), [K12 education](#), [medical research and talent](#), and [environmental innovation](#). Of these, Valhalla’s primary area of focus is early childhood development, where the Foundation focuses on improving Kindergarten readiness rates nationwide with a particular emphasis on low-income children and children of color. Additionally, Valhalla is an active participant in collaborative philanthropy efforts through [The Audacious Project](#) and is a General Partner in [Blue Meridian Partners](#). Valhalla has also made sizable gifts to COVID relief and racial justice efforts in the past year.

Scott and Signe – sole Trustees of Valhalla – have already committed over \$500 million, are proud signatories of [The Giving Pledge](#), and are passionate about the idea of “giving while living.” Therefore, the Foundation’s lean grant-making team works with focused attention to investigate who is achieving “outcomes that matter,” invest millions of dollars in those leaders and their solutions, and accelerate the scale of those models.

True to its founders, Valhalla applies a data-driven and highly rigorous approach to grant-making and also provides ongoing non-monetary support to help portfolio organizations scale their impact. Examples of these services include connections to other funders, goal-setting and strategy assistance, strengthening hiring processes, strengthening board practices and recruitment, executive coaches to help leaders with specific challenges they’re facing, and candid feedback and moral support.

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

## THE OPPORTUNITY

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Valhalla is seeking a Senior Director to join its small, close-knit, and growing team, and to be an integral part of this evolving and innovative organization. Senior Directors are leaders and contributors to grant-making at the Foundation. They develop specific grant recommendations; support and coach portfolio organizations to accelerate their impact; monitor impact and progress; and shape evolving investment strategies based on learnings.

This particular Senior Director will focus on **three issue areas within Valhalla’s portfolio**:

- **Early childhood development:** Valhalla considers early childhood development (prenatal to age 5) to be its main area of focus, with a goal of improving Kindergarten readiness so that all children get off to a strong start in learning and life. It is the primary growth area for the Foundation and the area where Valhalla supports organizations most intensively. The Senior Director will own relationships

with and advise leaders of early childhood portfolio organizations, conduct additional sourcing and due diligence in this area, harvest learning from portfolio organizations individually and collectively, and connect and collaborate with leaders and other funders in this area. Portfolio organizations include: scalable programs proven to dramatically improve the social-emotional, cognitive, and health outcomes that matter for Kindergarten readiness; research efforts that identify and illuminate what moves the needle on Kindergarten readiness; and field- building efforts that develop tools and resources needed in the field to improve Kindergarten readiness. [Click here for more details.](#)

- **Data Literacy:** Valhalla is exploring a new initiative related to math and data science education in K12, with a goal of improving the number of students who are prepared to succeed in an economy and society that requires data literacy. Data literacy is becoming central to the modern world. Data-centric jobs are growing rapidly, and data literacy is increasingly necessary to consume information and make choices in everyday life. And yet schools today aren't teaching students the skills they need to be data literate. The Senior Director will help to shape and advance this initiative: learning about challenges and opportunities in the field, developing investment recommendations, collaborating with leaders and other funders in this area, and coaching and advising portfolio organizations.
- **Medical research and talent:** Valhalla works to identify medical breakthroughs for multiple sclerosis and related autoimmune diseases by funding leading researchers in the field with early, consistent, meaningful, and catalytic funding. Valhalla also works to accelerate medical breakthroughs across a range of diseases by funding promising scientists early in their careers at institutions that can nurture their talents. The Senior Director will spend 5-10% of his/her time managing a cluster of about four portfolio organizations leading initiatives in this area and working closely with one of the Trustees to design and evaluate reinvestment opportunities in these organizations.

In all of the areas above, the Senior Director will work closely with the Executive Director and other members of the Valhalla team, including Scott and Signe, who are actively involved in the work of the Foundation. Additionally, many of Valhalla's diligence efforts are fueled by a dedicated team of external consultants from The Bridgespan Group whose members meet frequently with the Valhalla team.

## KEY RESPONSIBILITIES

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Reporting to Valhalla's Executive Director, the Senior Director's key functional responsibilities are:

- **Coaching of high-potential portfolio organizations:** The Senior Director will lead the relationship with a subset of portfolio organizations to supercharge their impact and scale. As part of this, the Senior Director will identify where an organization is performing well versus where it may be facing challenges and risks and will serve as a coach and mentor to the leaders of these organizations. The Senior Director will marshal capacity-building resources and facilitate the involvement of the Trustees and other members of the Valhalla team in targeted support of these organizations, as appropriate.
- **Collaborating with and influencing others in the field:** In math and early childhood, a key part of the Senior Director's role will be to build relationships with other leaders and funders in the field, to collaborate with them, and to learn from and influence them. This will involve staying apprised of key sector trends; participating in relevant networks by attending conferences; staying closely connected to key leaders/funders; possibly speaking at conferences; and possibly organizing convenings/gatherings and/or writing.

- **Harvesting learning from portfolio organizations and across individual portfolios:** The Director will glean and distill data, insights, and learning from portfolio organizations and initiatives, then effectively and efficiently share insights and learnings with the Valhalla team, the Trustees, and other portfolio organizations. Further, the Senior Director will synthesize key trends and insights from the sectors in which the Trustees are investing to inform Valhalla’s philanthropic strategy and sourcing of new opportunities.
- **Supporting diligence on new investment opportunities and developing reinvestment recommendations:** The Senior Director will support diligence on new investment opportunities, often in conjunction with consultants from The Bridgespan Group. In addition, as grants mature or new rounds of funding are raised for the portfolio organizations on which the Senior Director has been the lead relationship manager, the Senior Director will conduct due diligence and present a point of view on whether to reinvest, the appropriate grant amount and structure, and the key risks associated with an investment recommendation.

While the key responsibilities named above are central and specific, included in the role is a broader expectation that - like all senior-level Valhalla team members - this Senior Director will be sought out as a “generalist” for ideas, opinions, and efforts on unforeseen initiatives and projects typical of an evolving, entrepreneurial, and dynamic organization. This flexibility is a critical competency for all employees and, ideally, is part of what makes this role compelling.

## CANDIDATE PROFILE

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The successful candidate will be a collaborative leader and a curious, continuous learner who understands, at least broadly, the research about what matters in early childhood development and/or K12 education as well as the systems that affect child outcomes. Additionally, Valhalla is seeking candidates who ideally possess the following skills, experience, and attributes:

- **Strategic leadership and coaching skills:**
  - The ability to think critically about what it takes to achieve outcomes in the three key impact areas central to this role
  - A track record of helping leaders identify their needs and solutions to hurdles they face, and of influencing leaders (without direct authority) to make decisions / act in ways that deliver outstanding results
  - The capacity to listen to and value the views of others, even when possessing an existing point of view
  - The ability and courage to clearly say what you think and why, even when it’s contrarian or bold
- **Communications skills:**
  - Excellent written skills, as evidenced by the ability to write strong assessments and recommendations with appropriate supporting rationale
  - Excellent oral communication skills, as evidenced by the ability to clearly and succinctly present perspectives with appropriate supporting rationale
  - Ability to credibly present Valhalla’s priorities and ideas to a range of constituents in a manner that energizes and inspires

- **Robust analytical skills and judgment:**
  - The ability to analyze data and research and appropriately assess impact, scale trajectory, financial sustainability, leadership/team strength, and other key success factors of potential portfolio organizations
  - The capacity to derive important insights from the analysis above, name strengths, weaknesses, and assumptions, and, ultimately, to make sound recommendations on investments
- **Personal characteristics:**
  - Demonstrated passion for social impact and social change
  - Humble learner orientation and appetite for feedback
  - A collegial and team-oriented working style
  - A track record for being highly productive and a “doer”
  - Unquestionable integrity
  - Respect of the fact that, ultimately, we are executing the vision of our Trustees

## COMPENSATION

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The position offers a highly competitive salary, performance-based bonuses, and generous benefits.

## ABOUT VALHALLA FOUNDATION / FOX HOLLOW VENTURES

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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 one day per week.

## CONTACT

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We have engaged [Promise54](#) to help with the hiring process. Please submit a compelling cover letter and resume via e-mail to [Leslie Nair](#).

**Fox Hollow Ventures is an equal opportunity employer.**

**Valhalla Foundation is building a diverse team that values diversity, equity, and inclusion.**