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EXECUTIVE POSITION PROFILE



ORGANIZATION

Constellation Lab (CoLab)

POSITION

Executive Director

APPLICATION DEADLINE

September 2nd, 2022

COMPENSATION

\$180,000-\$200,000

BRIEF

Ballinger | Leafblad is pleased to conduct the search for an Executive Director of Constellation Lab (CoLab) in Minneapolis, Minnesota

CONTACT

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ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW

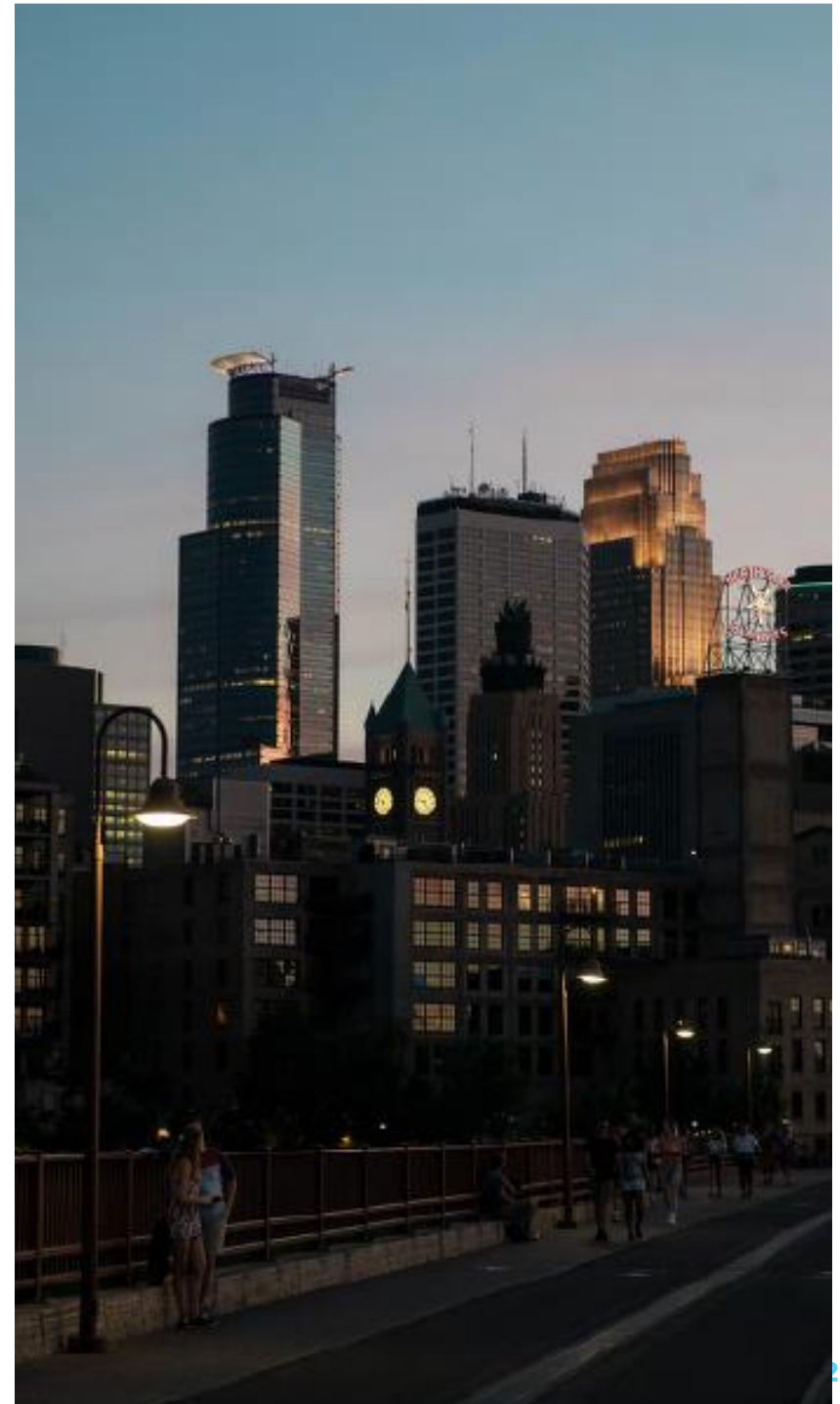
The Constellation Fund is seeking an innovative leader to develop and direct an independent, longitudinal research initiative, the Constellation Lab (CoLab). The CoLab will focus on designing and conducting longitudinal evaluations of poverty-fighting impacts among high-performing nonprofit organizations to generate learnings that lead to increased impact, growth, and scale.

[About the Constellation Fund](#)

The Constellation Fund is a poverty-fighting organization in the Twin Cities that invests philanthropic resources into nonprofits raising the living standards of individuals and families experiencing poverty in the seven-county metropolitan area. Constellation takes an outcome-based approach to this critical effort, prioritizing evidence over anecdotes to find, fund, and empower poverty-fighting service providers shown by evidence to be creating transformational impact in our community.

With one-in-five residents of the Twin Cities living in poverty, our philanthropic community must strategically focus its resources on the interventions providing the largest poverty-fighting impacts. Constellation approaches this pressing challenge by thoughtfully applying the principles of modern economic decision-making to the important business of local philanthropy. By carefully leveraging peer-reviewed research, local demographic information, and data from nonprofits, Constellation methodically measures the relative impacts of the varying nonprofit interventions in our community to ensure that precious philanthropic resources are allocated to the organizations found to be most impactful in the fight against poverty.

Since our Board of Directors underwrites Constellation's operating costs, every outside dollar raised by the organization goes directly to its carefully vetted nonprofit grantees, which are provided not only with funding, but also with access to best-in-class pro bono partners that can provide invaluable services and expertise otherwise inaccessible to most nonprofits in their efforts to improve and scale their impacts.



HISTORY

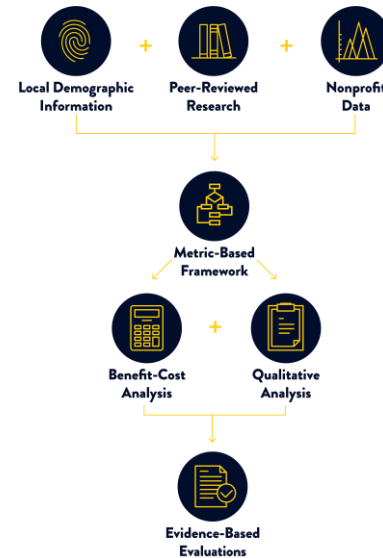
Prior to the start of the Constellation Fund, Founder Andrew Dayton lived in San Francisco and gained insight into nonprofit start-ups. Andrew was inspired by an organization called Tipping Point, which focused on fighting poverty in the Bay area. The company identified the most impactful nonprofit organizations in order to more efficiently give back to people in need.

Intrigued, Dayton assembled a team of experts in policy, economics and poverty alleviation and founded the Constellation Fund in 2018. The organization has one goal: to eradicate poverty by using predictive analytics to get the best possible return on philanthropic investment.

Since its founding, Constellation Fund staff have built grantmaking processes for a pilot grant cycle and developed methods and procedures to estimate the economic impact of potential non-profit partners. This research consisted of identifying and summarizing evidence of the effectiveness of nonprofit programs, identifying demographic characteristics of low-income individuals, and designing protocols to capture monetary benefits for these individuals.

Constellation Fund awards grants to nonprofit organizations with no restrictions on the use of funds, a rare form of capital in the philanthropic sector that allows the organizations to grow their impact purposefully. In addition, grantees receive connections to best-in-class pro bono partners to provide services and expertise otherwise inaccessible to most poverty-fighting organizations.

This model sets the stage for ongoing analysis, grantmaking and impact assessment by the organization.



ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE

The ‘culture’ of Constellation Fund and CoLab is emerging. The culture reflects a spirit of innovation and creativity that values patience and urgency equally while being deeply engaged in addressing significant disparities across the community.

Constellation Fund has a culture that is further identified by an entrepreneurial mindset in tandem with a deep investment in the longitudinal work-- required to have the necessary impact and outcomes.

Leadership and staff at Constellation Fund support solutions by focusing on leveraging philanthropic opportunities to:

- build on quantifiable solutions
- implement new practices
- elevate an emerging narrative about the significant impact targeted contributions can have in addressing some of our deepest community disparities

The culture is a nurturing environment reflective of a passion and interest to grow something unique across the community landscape. Staff seek to act with agility and creativity and function at the highest possible level.

MISSION

Fight poverty in the Twin Cities by raising the living standards of individuals living below the poverty line in the seven-county metro area.

VALUES

Impact
Courage
Interdependence
Transparency
Rigor

IMPACT AREAS

Education
Employment
Health
Housing

VALUES

Impact

- Make every decision with one question in mind: what will have the greatest impact for those living in poverty in the Twin Cities?
- Make informed, reasoned choices in the face of ambiguity or pressure.
- Seek to identify root causes and to move beyond treating symptoms.
- Challenge prevailing assumptions and pursue better approaches.

Courage

- Follow the best available evidence, even when it's uncomfortable.
- Willing to respectfully rethink the status quo.
- Make tough decisions, take smart risks, and are open to possible failures.
- Question actions inconsistent with our values.

Interdependence

- Go to great lengths to carefully select our partners, and we trust them.
- Treat everyone with kindness, respect, and compassion.
- Build strong partnerships and celebrate each unique contribution.
- Seek and embrace diverse perspectives to make better decisions.

Transparency

- Seek candid feedback and work to deeply understand before reacting.
- Admit mistakes freely and openly.
- Share information and assets proactively.
- Provide polite, honest, and timely feedback to colleagues and partners.

Rigor

- Engender confidence by demonstrating consistent results.
- Invite and accomplish remarkable amounts of meaningful work.
- Strive relentlessly to improve our organization and our community.
- Recognize that we all have biases and work to grow past them.



IMPACT AREAS

Constellation Fund invests in and empowers organizations that demonstrably raise the living standards of individuals living in poverty in the Twin Cities. Since launching, Constellation has conducted over 50 rigorous, six-month evaluations of nonprofit organizations addressing poverty in the Twin Cities across four main programmatic areas: **education, employment, health, and housing**. These are broad categories, so Constellation prioritizes the evaluation of organizations addressing the key drivers that local data and research indicates are exacerbating inequities in each impact area.

Since the Board of Directors and Leadership Funders cover all of Constellation’s overhead costs, every dollar donated is invested in the organizations making the most impact in alleviating poverty in the Twin Cities.



EDUCATION



HEALTH



EMPLOYMENT



HOUSING

GRANTMAKING

The parameters required of organizations to receive grants are:

- Organizations must operate within one or more of the following counties in the seven-county Twin Cities region: Anoka, Carver, Dakota, Hennepin, Ramsey, Scott, or Washington.
- Organizations must predominately serve those living below 185% of the federal poverty line in our community.
- A significant portion of the organization’s programs must address one or more of Constellation’s core poverty-fighting impact areas: education, housing, health, and employment.

Constellation has built an initial portfolio of 30 grantees. On average, these grantees are projected to turn every dollar invested into \$5.30 of lifetime health and wealth improvements for individuals experiencing poverty, more than twice the projected \$2.60 improvement from those organizations that Constellation has evaluated but declined to fund.

While this contrast is stark, it likely understates the long-term impact of fidelity to an objective, evidence-driven approach to poverty alleviation. The average poverty-fighting return-on-investment for the top quartile of organizations evaluated by Constellation is \$7.10-to-1, as compared to \$1.50-to-1 for the bottom quartile. As the sample size of evaluations continues to grow, it stands to reason that the overall impact of Constellation’s ever-refining portfolio will continue to grow with it.

Constellation sees itself as playing a specific and necessary role within the broader approach to alleviating poverty in the community: to objectively identify and holistically support the nonprofits that have the potential to become the mighty oak trees in our community, providing transformational impact for those who need it most.

Constellation’s metrics are:

A STANDARD FOR COMPARING OPPORTUNITIES

Metrics allow for the weighting of similar and dissimilar programs.

A TOOL FOR ACHIEVING TRANSPARENCY

Constellation welcomes outside voices to examine, critique and improve our metrics.

A DIAGNOSTIC DEVICE

What do our highest-scoring grantees have in common? Our lowest?

A METHOD FOR ASSESSING CONSTELLATION

We measure our own impact the same way we measure our grantees: how much poverty we eliminate with each dollar we spend.

SUMMARY

Constellation has built nearly 200 poverty-fighting metrics to help steer philanthropic resources to nonprofit organizations demonstrating long-term impacts; however, the availability of rigorous, longitudinal outcomes data remains limited.

Nonprofits rarely have the resources to spend on the tracking of such valuable data, understandably focusing their resources on the critical services that provide needed support to their clients.

Launching as a partnership between the Constellation Fund and another generous philanthropic funder, CoLab will help fill this gap by carrying out independent research on the effectiveness of promising nonprofit organizations, providing rigorous evidence on their effectiveness and helping to drive organizational improvement. Each research project is likely to consist of an in-depth, longitudinal evaluation of poverty-fighting impacts among those the organization serves, using experimental or quasi-experimental methods.

The Executive Director of CoLab is a new and pivotal leadership role charged with scoping, designing, and directing an innovative, vanguard research initiative to evaluate and ultimately help scale poverty-fighting interventions. In this dynamic position, the ideal candidate has a proven record of leadership, strategy development and implementation, and a deep understanding of research design and execution. The Executive Director must be able to cultivate and sustain strong relationships with a wide range of stakeholders including research partners, nonprofits, government agencies, and other philanthropic leaders.

The Executive Director will report directly to Constellation's COO and will work in partnership with Constellation Fund's CEO and partners. The Executive Director will also work alongside and, when appropriate, in collaboration with Constellation's talented evaluation team, and will benefit from Constellation's infrastructure. Additionally, the role will have relevant access to Constellation's extensive network of partners, including the Constellation Impact Council, an advisory body composed of several of Minnesota's leading academics and economists.

ESSENTIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Leadership

- Developing the strategies behind and implementing the plans necessary for the effective launch of an innovative new initiative.
- Representing the Constellation Fund and CoLab by effectively crafting and communicating the organization's mission and program priorities to partners and stakeholders.
- Creating and maintaining a strong network of partners within the nonprofit and philanthropic sectors to understand opportunities and share learnings.
- Managing the day-to-day operations of CoLab, including overseeing research projects, grant administration, and operations, and ensuring compliance with all policies and with legal and contractual obligations.
- Managing organizational developments; as CoLab launches and executes successful projects, additional investments may be made into more staff or contracts in order to expand the execution of CoLab's strategy – the ideal candidate would have interest and demonstrated competence in management.

Grantmaking & Research

- Developing and implementing a process of prospect analysis and grant selection, including through the review of existing data and evidence, and interviews with management, participants, and other stakeholders.
- Designing and implementing longitudinal research studies, including those that focus on outcomes that are practically important but potentially difficult to measure reliably; the Executive Director must have the expertise to lead the design of the studies and will identify and work with consulting groups that specialize in designing and implementing research.
- Monitoring ongoing research, including following up on a study's progression to ensure that the research team is following the plan and passing on any early learnings that might benefit the nonprofit.
- Preparing a final report on each study for the nonprofit, as well as for Constellation and its partners; final reports should summarize a study's results in a format that is easily digestible and include statistical findings as well as relevant non-statistical learnings.

COMPETENCIES

- Must be a self-starter. Independent work and self-motivation will be key to success.
- Must have exceptional analytical skills with high attention to technical and nontechnical details.
- Must have exceptional organization skills, with previous project management experience.
- Must be a resourceful problem-solver and critical thinker, be proactive in leveraging opportunities, and anticipating and averting problems.
- Must be good at networking and have good people skills.
- Must be able to speak and write clearly, effectively, and succinctly, including under time constraints.
- Must have a high degree of appreciation for the immense challenges facing poverty-fighting organizations and social services work, and respect for the individuals dedicated to those important efforts.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

- Passion for Constellation and CoLab's mission and vision.
- 5+ years of professional experience, preferably some in the for-profit world.
- Advanced degree in a field that requires significant statistical coursework.
- Superb relationship management, interpersonal, and communication (written and spoken) skills.
- Strong understanding of the technology and information systems pertinent to the role.
- Demonstrated ability for handling multiple, complex projects simultaneously in a fast-paced environment.
- The ability to occasionally participate in evening and weekend events.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS

Constellation offers a benefits package that is competitive with industry standards. Salary is commensurate with experience.

Salary Range: \$180,000 – \$200,000

CONSTELLATION FUND IS AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION / EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER

The Constellation Fund is an equal opportunity employer. All applicants will be considered for employment without attention to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, veteran or disability status. Applicants from underrepresented backgrounds in philanthropy and applicants who identify as low-income are encouraged to apply.