

Program Lead

Hybrid | New Canaan, Connecticut



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Established in 1988, **The Tow Foundation** is a family foundation committed to promoting access to opportunities so that all individuals and communities can thrive. Grounded in its work in Connecticut and New York, the Foundation supports nonprofit organizations and leaders to find and enact innovative solutions to persistent inequality that will result in transformative and lasting progress. To accomplish its goals, the Foundation and its staff of 14 dispersed approximately \$27MM in grants in 2024 to fund efforts across its five impact areas: Equity and Justice, Medicine and Public Health, Arts and Culture, Higher Education, and Civic Engagement. The Foundation intends to make grants totaling \$50MM this year.

At this exciting moment of growth and impact, the Foundation seeks nominations and applications for a Program Lead. This role is similar to a Program Officer role, and its alternative title reflects the highly relational and trust-based approach the Foundation brings to its work. As a member of the Program team, the Program Lead will have the opportunity to lead and manage a portfolio of grantees across the five impact areas of the Foundation, research new opportunities, engage in learning and strategy with their colleagues, the Board of Directors, external thought-partners and grantees, and increase the capacity of both the Foundation team and the grantee organizations with whom they partner. The Tow Foundation is a collaborative, nimble, and entrepreneurial organization, so they are looking for a Program Lead who will thrive in that environment.



KEY OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

The Program Lead reports to the Vice President of Strategy and Impact, and will work closely with grantees, board members, and program staff – two Program Directors and a Program Associate – on all aspects of the Foundation’s grantmaking and related cross-departmental initiatives. This role will lead and engage in this work in the following ways:

- **Relationships with Diverse Stakeholders:** Build strong, authentic partnerships with nonprofit and field leaders and elevate community voice to inform the grantmaking strategy. Act as a thought partner with grantees, peers and others. Cultivate, build, and maintain meaningful relationships with board, staff, field leaders, and others. Represent the Foundation and its work in a variety of venues and to a range of audiences.
- **Grantee Relationship Management:** Manage a portfolio of grants, serving as the primary relationship manager between the Foundation and charitable organizations. Practice a collaborative, responsive approach, clear communication and feedback, aligned with the Foundation’s trust-based approach to philanthropy. Develop new grant recommendations by conducting due diligence through site visits, in-depth materials review, financial analysis, and

other related activities. When opportunities originate with Board members, work collaboratively with them to develop and manage the grant and relationship. Prepare written and verbal presentations to support the Board's grantmaking decisions.

- **Overall Portfolio Management and Strategy:** Envision, identify, and cultivate potential strategic investments to realize long-term systems change. With the team, design and execute cross-portfolio projects and initiatives, including grantee convenings, support beyond the grant, special grant programs, grantmaking assessments, learning and evaluation debriefs. Participate in Program Team grant-related budgeting and planning.
- **Impact Evaluation and Due Diligence:** Continuously monitor grants for compliance, progress and lessons learned. Consistently maintain accurate grants management system records and adhere to administrative processes to ensure efficiency and impact analysis. Analyze outcomes and sector trends to assess effectiveness and inform future grantmaking decisions. Prepare reports, presentations, and strategic insights for internal and external stakeholders.
- **Organizational Learning Culture and Teamwork:** Participate in cross-team learning to support Foundation growth and development, shared goals, processes and practices, and a strong culture of collaboration and curiosity. Manage staff or interns as assigned. Share and discuss learnings with the Foundation's staff and Board of Directors to support their engagement, understanding, and contributions. Lead aspects of the Program Team's analysis, planning, and continuous improvement efforts.



QUALIFICATIONS OF THE IDEAL CANDIDATE

While no one candidate will embody all the qualifications enumerated below, the ideal candidate will possess many of the following:

Abilities and Attributes

- **Excels at relationship-building** and creating connections with diverse people across a variety of settings. Genuine enthusiasm for building trusting relationships. Strong customer service orientation.
- **Naturally curious and entrepreneurial**, with the ability to envision new possibilities and develop innovative opportunities that align with the Foundation's priorities and mission.
- **A generalist at heart**, who can enthusiastically delve into a variety of issue areas with humility and a learning stance.
- **Flexible, creative, and curious**, thrives in a fast-moving, complex environment. Proactive and diplomatic team member capable of moving work forward independently – as well as working collaboratively.
- **Approaches the work from a systems change orientation**, understanding the interconnectedness of various social issues. Analytical and big picture thinker with desire to move ideas to action.
- **Excellent communication skills**, with the ability to translate complex information into clear, concise written and verbal presentations. Demonstrates high-level of attention to detail and precision.

Desired Qualifications and Experience

- 10+ years of related professional experience, preferably within nonprofits and/or philanthropy.
- Strong project management skills, with demonstrated success in managing a dynamic portfolio of clients, grantees, donors, or other stakeholders.
- Experience managing competing priorities and meeting deadlines, with strong organizational capabilities and a positive attitude.
- Experience with and passion for managing people, including direct supervision as well as supporting the growth and development of the team.
- Brings a strong track record of building effective and strategic relationships within diverse communities, as well as a high degree of equity fluency.
- Experience with principles and practices of monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) to support organizational analysis, planning, and continuous improvement efforts.
- Highly proficient in Zoom, Slack, and all Microsoft Office applications; understanding of MacOS, iOS mobile technology and business apps. Familiarity and enthusiasm for working within databases, project management systems, and collaboration applications, such as SharePoint, Salesforce, and Asana.
- Demonstrated understanding of and commitment to advancing the Foundation's mission and impact areas.



COMPENSATION & BENEFITS, WORK LOCATION, AND ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Salary and Benefits

The salary for this position is \$135,000 – 150,000 annually. The Tow Foundation offers a generous benefits package that includes medical, dental, and vision insurance, Flexible Spending Account, and a 403(b) with an employer match. The Foundation also offers its employees generous paid time off, including 10 holidays, 15 days of vacation time, 6 sick days, and 2 additional personal days annually. The Foundation offers half-day Fridays in the summer, and the office is closed annually for the week between Christmas and New Year. In addition, the Foundation offers a tuition reimbursement plan and provides staff with the opportunity to make discretionary grants annually to nonprofits of their choice.

In Person Work Expectations

This position requires working in-person a minimum of two days per week at the Foundation's offices in New Canaan, CT. Attendance at additional external in-person Foundation events or meetings is expected, including occasional evenings and weekends.

Physical Requirements

The majority of this role will require attending meetings, sitting at a desk and working on a computer for prolonged periods. Must be comfortable attending indoor and outdoor events as needed. Able to lift up to 25 pounds on occasion.

Travel

Approximately 20% travel is required within New York and Connecticut for grantee meetings and sector events, with occasional travel required outside of the region.



TO APPLY

More information about **The Tow Foundation** may be found at: www.towfoundation.org.

This search is being led by [Emily Wexler](#) and [Rachel Burgoyne](#) of [NPAG](#). Candidates may submit their cover letter, outlining their interest and qualifications, along with their resume via NPAG's [website](#).

The Tow Foundation is an Equal Opportunity Employer and no person shall be discriminated against on the basis of race, creed, color, religion, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, marital status, age, veteran status, physical/mental disability, or any other characteristic protected by federal, state or local laws. We also consider qualified applicants regardless of criminal histories, consistent with legal requirements.