



Senior Philanthropy Advisor

Climate Lead

San Francisco, California or Remote in the New York Tri-State Area

THE SEARCH

Since its formal inception in 2019, Climate Lead has empowered philanthropic leaders everywhere to take immediate and far-reaching climate action, catalyzing more than \$4 billion into high-impact climate solutions and bringing over 100 new philanthropists to climate. By serving as an impartial guide, Climate Lead equips new climate philanthropists with the information and insights they need to drive transformative solutions. Climate Lead cuts through the complexity by curating roadmaps, in partnership with a diverse network of experts, to help philanthropists make a bold impact on climate from day one.

As Climate Lead invests in the growth of its philanthropy team amidst this decisive decade in the battle against climate change, the organization seeks two experienced senior philanthropy advisors (SPAs) – one to be based in the San Francisco Bay Area and one remotely based in the New York Tri-State area – to deliver transformative climate impact through strategic advising and exceptional philanthropic engagement. Reporting to the vice president, philanthropic advising (VP), the SPAs will join a highly collaborative team of individual contributors to directly support ultra-high-net-worth (UHNW) individuals and families in developing transformational climate giving strategies. For those attracted to a mission-driven, dynamic venture in its scaling 2.0 stage, the SPA role is an unparalleled opportunity for a skilled philanthropy professional to contribute to an important global effort addressing the climate crisis and facilitate meaningful impact on our planet's most pressing challenge.

The SPAs will directly engage with and provide strategic guidance to UHNW individuals and families, and their advisors, as Climate Lead supports a sophisticated global ecosystem to move billions into climate in the coming years. To be successful, the SPAs must understand how philanthropists operate at this level of giving in the eight- and nine-figure range, how to build authentic relationships with them, and how to spur them into action with the speed and scale this issue requires through engagement, learning, listening, and strategic advising. Experience in principal gifts level development or sophisticated and outcomes-oriented philanthropic advising is critical for this role. Climate Lead is also selectively interested in candidates who bring a similar track record in high-level political engagement, venture capital financing, private wealth management, or the technology sector – environments where individuals are meaningfully and regularly interfacing with UHNW individuals and influential leaders.

Notably, these positions will not assume existing portfolios, but will instead be charged with developing them from the outset, including in the New York Tri-State area where Climate Lead is establishing dedicated SPA capacity. Working in partnership with the director of new donor strategy, the SPAs will be responsible for identifying and cultivating new relationships, building and expanding a robust pipeline of UHNW individuals and families, and developing their portfolios from the ground up. Success in these positions will require an entrepreneurial mindset; a strong sense of ambition and drive; and genuine enthusiasm to leverage networks, forge new relationships, and spark connections to expand the pipeline of new philanthropists to move with urgency to meet the climate challenge.

The SPAs must also possess a collaborative disposition to engage with their peers on philanthropic strategy, as well as with internal partners on the global climate strategy and communications teams. While direct experience in climate philanthropy is not required, the successful candidates must demonstrate a compelling passion for supporting climate action and recognize that Climate Lead's collective environmental impact on our planet takes precedence over individual goals.

Climate Lead has retained Rachel Ellenport of the national executive search firm Isaacson, Miller to conduct this important recruitment. Confidential inquiries, nominations, and applications may be directed to the search firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT CLIMATE LEAD

Following the adoption of the Paris Agreement, leaders from Climate Lead's [founding funders](#) and key partners recognized that addressing the climate crisis at a level corresponding to the urgent threat would require more quick, at-scale philanthropic investments to lead transformational change. As a result, [Climate Lead](#), formerly known as Climate Leadership Initiative, was formed in 2019 to empower philanthropic leaders everywhere to take immediate and far-reaching climate action. As an impartial and trusted guide, Climate Lead equips new climate philanthropists with the resources and guidance they need to drive transformative solutions. Since its inception, Climate Lead has mobilized more than \$4 billion into high-impact climate solutions.

Climate Lead Services and Advantage

Climate lead provides specialized services to help new climate philanthropists give with confidence and make influential, game-changing contributions to address the climate crisis. These include:

- **One-on-one advising:** Climate Lead provides a clear, comprehensive framework for climate action that deepens learning and informs philanthropic decision-making. Advisors' guidance is tailored to philanthropists' needs and interests, with climate impact always at the forefront.
- **Curated portfolios of solutions that have been vetted for impact:** Climate Lead curates customized portfolios of climate solutions with proven climate impact based on UHNW individuals' interests and goals. Climate Lead advisors do not advocate for any single organization

or theory of change, but seek to find a diverse array of philanthropic opportunities that address funding needs across the ecosystem.

- **Connections to a diverse, global network of climate experts and peer philanthropists:** Climate Lead staff forge deep connections to the wider climate community of advisors, field-partners, and peers. The organization’s global network of experts advise Climate Lead staff on climate priorities that are evidence-based, scalable, and equitable. [Peer philanthropists](#) also share insights from their own journeys, inspiring new-to-climate philanthropists to be bold from the outset.
- **Learning events and resources:** The guidance Climate Lead provides to philanthropists is free, customized, and focused on advancing high-impact solutions that ensure a healthy and equitable future for all. Various resources produced by Climate Lead may be found [here](#).

Climate Lead guides UHNW individuals and families toward urgent and high-impact climate giving. The organization’s approach provides:

- **Specialized expertise:** Translating credible and current insights from a global, diverse network of climate experts and leaders to help philanthropists deepen their climate learning and make informed choices that create tangible impact.
- **Trusted and impartial advice:** Offering services free of charge, prioritizing philanthropic leaders’ interests and climate impact above all.
- **Networked community:** Connecting philanthropists to a built-in global community of advisors, field partners, climate funders, and other luminaries who are interested in maximizing impact through partnership and collective action.
- **Tailored support:** Meeting philanthropists where they are and providing holistic support along every step of their climate journeys.

ROLE OF THE SENIOR PHILANTHROPY ADVISOR

Reporting to the vice president, philanthropic advising, the SPAs – one in the San Francisco Bay Area and one in the New York Tri-State area – will guide UHNW individuals and families in developing bold, high-impact giving strategies. The SPAs will join and contribute to a collaborative team dedicated to catalyzing significant climate investments and fostering transformative philanthropic action at the highest levels. Ideal candidates will bring a demonstrated track record of principal gift fundraising in the eight- to nine-figure range and/or sophisticated philanthropic advising, resulting in measurable and transformational philanthropy; a genuine passion for climate action; and the ability to build authentic relationships that inspire urgent and scalable impact.

MAJOR FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Proactively draw in new philanthropists to climate

- Proactively develop strategies to engage philanthropists new to climate, including through peer volunteers, influencers, and curated events and experiences.
- Represent Climate Lead externally, building credibility and trust across a range of philanthropic constituents and partners.

2. Serve as a trusted guide for philanthropists new to climate

- Deeply understand the interests, influencers, and decision-making of philanthropists new to climate and design the impactful steps and strategies that will help them give and scale their giving. This could include support for climate learning, help in setting goals and values, processes to choose their priorities once they understand what is important for climate, portfolio development, and more.
- Partner with the Global Climate Strategies and Communications teams to create products translated for philanthropists new to climate, including thematic landscapes, presentations, tailored portfolio recommendations, vetted solution briefs, and more.
- Speed philanthropists' climate journeys through curated connections with peer philanthropists, which can include strategically choosing the right peer connections, briefing participants for maximum impact, and facilitating peer-to-peer engagements for maximum impact and follow-up.

3. Support experienced peer volunteers

- Staff a select number of experienced climate philanthropists in their principal-to-principal engagement with peers as “ambassadors” for climate, akin to campaign volunteer engagement in a development organization.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

Success Criteria

Additional success factors for the SPA role include:

- **Philanthropic Transformation:** Builds deep trust with UHNW individuals and families and enables significant, values-aligned philanthropic commitments to climate.
- **Results Orientation:** Drives high-quality outcomes with a relentless focus on team goals and collective success; adapts with agility to a dynamic landscape.

- **Strategic Judgment:** Demonstrates strong situational judgment and delivers tailored solutions in complex, high-stakes scenarios; applies judgment with intentionality, focusing energy where it matters most and setting bold strategies to advance philanthropic engagement. Elevates collective ambition among the philanthropy team, influences the pace of giving, and leverages external networks to accelerate progress.
- **Entrepreneurial Mindset:** Brings creativity, innovation, and a builder's spirit to pipeline development; demonstrates comfort with ambiguity and energy for creating opportunities from the ground up.
- **Mission and Values Alignment:** Embodies Climate Lead's core values of care, courage, integrity, collaboration, a growth mindset, and purpose, while demonstrating a strong, unwavering ambition for transformative climate impact.

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

Successful candidates will possess many, if not most, of the following skills and abilities:

- A minimum of 10 years of progressive experience in philanthropy, principal gift fundraising, or UHNW client advising, or equivalent fields such as political, venture capital, or technology sectors.
- Proven track record of securing principal gifts, advising large-scale philanthropic investments, or engaging highly influential leaders in the political, technology, or similarly complex sectors.
- Exceptional ability to design and execute tailored strategies that engage, inspire, and mobilize UHNW individuals and families toward ambitious, high-impact giving.
- Excellent strategic thinking, communication, and relationship-building skills.
- Ability to thrive in a fast-paced, evolving environment and maintain a learning mindset.
- Deep commitment to climate action and the power of philanthropy to drive systemic change.

WORK ENVIRONMENT

San Francisco-based position: This role is based at Climate Lead's headquarters in San Francisco, California which operates in a hybrid in-office environment. Staff in the San Francisco Bay Area currently work in the downtown office, located in the Ferry Building, Tuesday through Thursday each week and typically work from a home location the other days.

New York-based position: This role is based in the New York Tri-State area and operates in a remote environment from a home office. Climate Lead offers a one-time stipend for home office equipment as well as a monthly stipend for Wi-Fi. The SPA may elect to use a company-issued cell phone or submit for reimbursement if using a personal device.

TRAVEL EXPECTATIONS

These roles involve approximately 15 percent travel annually for meetings, site visits, team gatherings, and select events. The New York-based position is expected to travel to Climate Lead's headquarters in San Francisco, California for regular team and all-staff retreats, roughly three times per year, with significant advance notice. When necessary, SPAs are also expected to engage in evening events or dinners, occasionally on weekends, particularly to engage meaningfully in pipeline development work.

COMPENSATION

The anticipated compensation range for this position is \$250,000 to \$280,000. Climate Lead offers a competitive total rewards package, enabling its talented staff to prioritize health and well-being. Climate Lead's benefits package prioritizes caring for staff's diverse needs, including rich plan offerings and a generous retirement contribution. The compensation package is driven by market data, reviewed annually, and structured to attract and retain expert talent while prioritizing collaboration.

APPLICATIONS, INQUIRIES, AND NOMINATIONS

Screening of complete applications will begin immediately and continue until the completion of the search process. Inquiries, nominations, referrals, and CVs with cover letters should be sent via the Isaacson, Miller website below, or directly to Nicole at npoe@imsearch.com. Electronic submission of materials is strongly encouraged.

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/climate-lead/senior-philanthropic-advisor-new-york-region>

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/climate-lead/senior-philanthropic-advisor-san-francisco-bay-area>

Rachel Ellenport, Partner
Nicole Poe, Managing Associate
Rebecca Lyons, Search Coordinator

Climate Lead values diversity and always treats all employees and job applicants based on merit, qualifications, competence, and talent. Climate Lead does not discriminate on the basis of or traits historically associated with race, color, religion, religious creed, national origin, ancestry, citizenship, physical or mental disability, medical condition, genetic information, marital status, sex, gender, gender identity, gender expression, age, sexual orientation, veteran and/or military status, domestic violence victim status, political affiliation, and any other status protected by state or federal law.

ADDENDUM

Leadership and Governance

Jennifer Kitt, President

Jennifer Kitt is president of Climate Lead, where she leads the organization as it builds a model to harness philanthropists' interest, passion, and generosity to increase philanthropic funding for the most profound challenge of our time. As an advisor to philanthropists, head of the leadership team, and a trusted strategic partner for organizations working to address the climate crisis, she is focused on building a community to bring new ultra-high-net-worth individuals and families into the climate space to fund promising, far-reaching solutions.

Jennifer brings more than 20 years of experience working with philanthropists, corporations, and foundations to fund high-impact causes. She also has decades of experience in community building, philanthropic collaboration, and complex problem solving.

Prior to joining Climate Lead, Jennifer was the chief development officer for Stanford University's Medical Center, Stanford's largest fundraising team with more than 140 staff focused on serving both the School of Medicine and the Stanford Health Care clinical system. At Stanford, Jennifer worked closely with distinguished faculty and university leaders, trustees, and members of the Stanford Medicine boards. She helped grow fundraising during her more than seven years there from \$150 million to more than \$300 million annually for fundamental research, clinical research, and research and clinical buildings, including the new Stanford Hospital.

Before Stanford, Jennifer served in senior management roles at the University of California, Berkeley, including leading development programs for parents, reunions, and campaign regions. Prior to working in higher education, she was a senior attorney for IBM, where she learned to think strategically, solve complex problems, and build partnerships even in tough negotiations. Jennifer earned JD and bachelor's degrees at Georgetown University.

Robynn Steffen, Executive Vice President, Philanthropy

Robynn Steffen is the executive vice president, philanthropy at Climate Lead, and a member of the leadership team, where she has played a leading role in building an organization that empowers philanthropic leaders to take immediate and far-reaching climate action. Robynn also leads the team that serves as trusted guides to philanthropists new to climate.

Robynn brings more than 20 years of experience in solving complex challenges through strategic philanthropy, policy, partnerships, and impact investments. Before joining Climate Lead, Robynn led Omidyar Network's work to accelerate the growth of the global impact investing movement. In that role, she frequently advised principals, family offices, and foundations on deploying philanthropic and investment capital to achieve their impact goals.

Before Omidyar Network, Robynn worked at the White House, the Clinton Global Initiative, and as the founding executive director of a start-up nonprofit. At each, she dedicated her work to low-income communities around the globe, the same communities we now know will be among the first and worst hit by climate change. Robynn received a JD from Yale Law School and holds bachelor's and master's degrees in political science from Yale University.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by Climate Lead. The material presented in this leadership profile should be relied on for informational purposes only. While every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of this information, the original source documents and information provided by Climate Lead would supersede any conflicting information in this document.