



Director of Individual Giving
Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Portland, Maine

THE SEARCH

The [Gulf of Maine Research Institute](#) (GMRI) seeks a visionary, collaborative, and accomplished program builder to serve as its inaugural director of individual giving (director). Reporting to the chief development officer (CDO), the director will provide strategic leadership for GMRI's major and principal gifts program and play a central role in advancing the organization's campaign and long-term philanthropic growth—designing and implementing a best-in-class individual giving program that strengthens donor engagement, expands GMRI's pipeline of transformational investments, and builds a culture of disciplined portfolio management and donor-centered relationship management.

The director joins GMRI at a pivotal moment. The organization is advancing a \$100 million comprehensive campaign, the largest fundraising initiative in its history—now in its readiness and quiet phase. Guided by a new strategic plan and the leadership of President & CEO Glenn Prickett, the director will have the extraordinary opportunity to help shape the future of one of the nation's leading marine research organizations, building deep, lasting partnerships with philanthropists passionate about protecting our oceans, scaling the blue economy, and safeguarding the vitality of coastal communities.

As a frontline fundraising leader, the director will personally manage a portfolio of approximately 50-75 major and principal gift prospects capable of making philanthropic investments of \$100,000 or more. Working in close partnership with the President & CEO, CDO, board members, campaign volunteers, scientists, and senior leadership, the director will develop and execute highly individualized cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies that inspire transformational giving to GMRI's mission.

The director will also provide leadership, coaching, and strategic guidance to an associate director of development, individual giving, while serving as a trusted fundraising advisor to colleagues and volunteers across the organization—helping establish the systems, practices, and collaborative culture needed to sustain GMRI's ambitious fundraising goals well beyond the current campaign.

GMRI has retained Isaacson, Miller, a global executive search firm, to assist in this search. All inquiries, nominations, referrals, and applications should be sent in confidence to the firm as indicated at the end of this document.

ABOUT THE GULF OF MAINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

The Gulf of Maine Research Institute develops and delivers collaborative solutions to global ocean challenges. This independent, objective nonprofit organization is dedicated to the resilience of the Gulf of Maine ecosystem and the communities that depend on it. GMRI leverages the Gulf of Maine to test and develop solutions to ocean challenges with much broader global relevance. The organization collaborates with stakeholders to support healthy ocean ecosystems, a thriving blue economy, sustainable seafood, and climate-resilient coastal communities.

GMRI's [Science Division](#) conducts transdisciplinary research across biological, physical, and social sciences to deepen understanding and deliver that information to the people who need it most. The division's labs include Integrated Systems Ecology, Fisheries Ecology, Coastal and Marine Economics, Coastal Dynamics, Biological Oceanography, Ocean Data Products, and Learning Sciences.

The [Impact Division](#)—comprising the Community, Education, and Economic Development departments—turns knowledge into action to ensure communities can create and access the information, resources, and relationships they need to make important decisions.

Strategic Plan

GMRI's 2025-2030 Strategic Plan focuses on [four strategic initiatives](#):

- **Adapting Fisheries and Seafood:** Ensuring marine ecosystems, fisheries and seafood systems in the Gulf of Maine and beyond thrive as they adapt to change.
- **Building Climate-Ready Communities:** Helping communities connected to the Gulf of Maine successfully adapt to rapid change.
- **Developing the Blue Economy and Supporting Working Waterfronts:** Revitalizing coastal communities by supporting traditional and emerging industries and protecting vital infrastructure.
- **Managing Carbon and Advancing Energy Solutions:** Supporting the ocean's ability to sequester carbon and provide ecosystem services, creating a lower-carbon economy, and improving the resilience of electrical infrastructure.

GMRI also advances its mission through an array of [projects](#) designed to serve and support its stakeholders. The organization is undergoing a shift to transition its structure from a collection of programs and projects to an integrated organization pursuing a small set of strategic initiatives. A couple of examples that illustrate the program work that stacks up to the strategic plan include:

- The [Aquaculture Apprenticeship Program](#) is a first-of-its-kind workforce development initiative designed to train the next generation of aquaculture professionals in Maine. This earn-while-you-

learn model provides a structured pathway for aspiring farmers to gain hands-on experience, technical skills, and industry knowledge needed for long-term careers in aquaculture.

- Working waterfronts are a complex ecosystem of infrastructure, assets, relationships and uses, with deep social and cultural value, and facing a range of climate-related risks. Through its [Climate Smart Working Waterfronts](#) program, GMRI developed a planning pathway that leverages the organization's climate science expertise, community-driven municipal planning approach, and knowledge of waterfront economies that can be used by state officials, municipal governments, regional planning organizations, and blue economy businesses to build climate resilience in working waterfront communities.
- Each year, GMRI hosts nearly 10,000 Maine middle schoolers in its [LabVenture](#) program: a hands-on, interactive, authentic investigation of the changing Gulf of Maine ecosystem. Completely free for Maine schools, nearly 70% of the state of Maine's fifth- and sixth-grade cohort experience LabVenture annually. Students use scientific tools and methods of inquiry to explore many of the same questions about the Gulf of Maine that GMRI's research scientists are addressing.
- Established in September 2025, the [Physical Oceanography Lab](#) expands GMRI's research focused on the drivers and predictability of ocean change. The lab investigates key physical processes—including temperature variability, marine heat waves, circulation patterns, and shelf-slope exchange—that influence marine ecosystems in the Gulf of Maine and Northwest Atlantic. This lab leads GMRI's flagship Gulf of Maine [warming reporting](#), strengthening connections between physical ocean science and ecosystem-based research.
- The [Sustainable Seafood Program](#) supports economic and ecologic sustainability, working with industry leaders across the supply chain—retailers, restaurants, seafood dealers, fishermen, and other stakeholders—to build market demand and empower consumers to find and buy Gulf of Maine seafood.

In recent years, GMRI has deepened its role as a primary owner of waterfront property in Portland, Maine, taking on the responsibility for protecting and preserving working waterfront access and demonstrating a model of low-carbon, climate-resilient solutions for this key infrastructure. Acquired by GMRI in 2021, Union Wharf is Portland's oldest continuously used wharf on Commercial Street. The Institute's plans for Union Wharf include expanding its capacity to support innovative fishermen and fish processors, the aquaculture industry, and other marine economy innovators.

Leadership and Governance

Glenn Prickett

Glenn Prickett joined GMRI as President and CEO in September 2023. He has served in a variety of environmental leadership roles over the course of his 35-year career, working across NGOs, government agencies, volunteer organizations, and the private sector. Most recently, he served as the President and

CEO of the World Environment Center, a global organization that advances sustainable development through corporate business practices across Europe, Latin America, and North America. Before that, Prickett served in senior executive and management roles at The Nature Conservancy, Conservation International, and the U.S. Agency for International Development. Prickett also previously served as board co-chair at the Keystone Policy Center and strategic planning chair at the Woodwell Climate Research Center.

Throughout his career, Prickett has focused on climate change, leading projects related to greenhouse gas mitigation in various sectors like energy, forestry, and agriculture. He has also been involved in corporate partnerships for climate resilience and adaptation. Prickett's prior marine-related work includes projects focused on fisheries policy, coastal flood insurance, and natural infrastructure.

Elizabeth Scott

Elizabeth Scott joined GMRI as chief development officer in March 2025. She brings more than 25 years of environment-focused fundraising experience and 10 years of leadership experience. Liz is responsible for developing and implementing the organization's fundraising strategy, resourcing the organization's strategic priorities, and fostering a culture of philanthropy.

Before joining GMRI, Liz served as Vice President of Development at the New England Aquarium, where she developed a revitalized strategy, built a team, and grew revenue. Before that, Liz served as Director of Development for The Nature Conservancy in Massachusetts, leading both local and global fundraising for the chapter. There, she grew revenue, developed innovative strategies for building long-term growth, and worked on two campaigns.

Liz holds a Bachelor of Arts in Policy and Management Studies from Dickinson College and several certificates, including Executive Leadership at the University of Cambridge (UK), Judge Business School.

Board of Directors

GMRI is governed by a 23-member [Board of Directors](#) and two advisory committees: a Science Advisory Committee and an Impact Advisory Committee. Both committees support the institute's complex, multidisciplinary, and entrepreneurial nature.

Fundraising and Financial Overview

Today, GMRI operates on an annual budget of approximately \$24 million, drawn from a diversified mix of federal and foundation grants, corporate giving, and individual philanthropy — split roughly evenly between public and private sources. In FY25 alone, GMRI raised \$21.8 million: 65% from highly competitive federal and state grants (including \$2.8 million in special one-time funding), 25% from individual donors, and 10% from corporate and foundation partners.

This diversified model has served GMRI well. The organization has navigated a volatile research funding landscape with remarkable steadiness, earning bipartisan support for its collaborative work with industry and its science education programs — two pillars central to its mission. But steadiness in the past is not the same as security in the future. As federal science funding grows increasingly unpredictable, GMRI has a narrow and valuable window to act — not from a position of crisis, but from a position of strength.

That is why GMRI is preparing to launch an ambitious, comprehensive campaign: a bold effort to fundamentally rebalance its funding model, shifting from roughly equal public and private support toward a future led by private philanthropy. This is not just a fundraising campaign — it's an insurance policy for GMRI's mission, and an investment in the organization's ability to act with agility, independence, and confidence no matter what happens in Washington.

The director of development for individual giving will be central to making this shift possible. By building a best-in-class individual giving program, the director will help GMRI convert its track record of impact into a durable base of private support — one that gives the organization the freedom to pursue bold science, respond quickly to emerging threats, and protect the Gulf of Maine and the people who depend on it for generations to come.

MAJOR FUNCTIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Development Strategy and Leadership

- Partner with the CDO to lead the strategy, planning, and execution of GMRI's major, principal, and planned giving fundraising programs in support of annual and campaign fundraising goals.
- Strengthen and continuously improve a best-in-class fundraising program by establishing effective fundraising strategies, portfolio management practices, performance expectations, and team processes.
- Lead the establishment of annual priorities, fundraising goals, budgets, and departmental work plans, while monitoring progress toward organizational objectives.
- Provide leadership, coaching, and performance management for a growing frontline fundraising team, fostering a collaborative, high-performing culture grounded in accountability and continuous improvement.

Frontline Fundraising

- Personally manage a portfolio of approximately 50-75 major, principal, and planned giving prospects capable of making philanthropic investments of \$100,000+ and annual fundraising goals of \$5,000,000 or more once the portfolio is fully developed.

- Develop and execute individualized cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship strategies—partnering with executive leadership, scientists, board members, and volunteers on donor visits, proposals, and follow-up—to maximize long-term donor engagement.
- Oversee the preparation of donor strategies, briefing materials, proposals, and stewardship reports that support successful fundraising outcomes.
- Maintain a deep understanding of GMRI's scientific and impact programs, strategic priorities, and funding opportunities to effectively connect donor passion with organizational impact.

Campaign and Philanthropic Strategy

- Serve as a senior leader in the execution of GMRI's \$100 million comprehensive campaign, helping shape campaign strategy, fundraising priorities, volunteer engagement, and donor pipeline development.
- Partner with the President & CEO, CDO, scientific leadership, and program teams to develop compelling philanthropic investment opportunities aligned with GMRI's strategic priorities.
- Develop engagement and solicitation strategies for GMRI's highest-priority donors and prospects, ensuring coordination across the organization from cultivation through stewardship.
- Serve as a strategic advisor to colleagues and volunteers serving as relationship partners for major and principal gift prospects.

Organizational Partnership

- Collaborate across GMRI—with communications, finance, and science and impact teams—to strengthen a culture of philanthropy and ensure donors experience coordinated, mission-centered engagement.
- Build strong partnerships with board members, campaign volunteers, and senior leaders to expand philanthropic engagement and advance campaign priorities.
- Represent the development team as a member of the Development Leadership Team, contributing to organizational planning, decision-making, and continuous improvement.
- Model GMRI's institutional values and serve as an ambassador for the organization's mission with donors, partners, and the broader community.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

The successful candidate will bring the following skills and experiences to the role.

- A bachelor's degree and a minimum of ten years of fundraising experience, including experience at a senior level.
- Proven success in closing major gifts at the six-and-seven-figure level, and in building and maintaining long-term relationships with individual donors, foundations, and corporations.
- Experience managing and supervising a fundraising team.
- Experience working within a complex institution or not-for-profit organization.
- Ability to synthesize complex information and translate it into clear, actionable frameworks for a diverse range of audiences.
- Sound independent judgment and strong problem-solving ability.
- Superb communication and presentation skills.
- Absolute discretion with highly confidential information.
- Proficiency with fundraising database platforms (e.g., Blackbaud Raiser's Edge), project management tools (e.g., Asana), and standard office/productivity software (e.g., Microsoft Office, Slack, and Box).
- Commitment to working in a diverse and inclusive environment.

The selected candidate will ideally also bring the following skills and experiences.

- Expert knowledge of current and evolving trends in major giving, solicitation, and capital campaigns.
- Extensive management experience, including the ability to motivate, coach, lead, set objectives, manage performance, and foster a culture of creativity and professional growth.
- Experience working closely with nonprofit boards, including identifying, nominating, recruiting, and onboarding new members.
- Working knowledge of the basics of charitable gift planning, along with a familiarity with more advanced gift planning concepts.
- Science background and experience.

LOCATION

A growing city of over 65,000 with a metropolitan area of over 500,000, Portland, Maine, sits on the beautiful and scenic Casco Bay on a peninsula in southern Maine. Home to bold coasts, high peaks, rural

farmlands, and thousands of lakes and rivers, Maine is a place of diverse cultures and traditions, including indigenous peoples and lifelong residents, as well as new immigrants who have just arrived and are excited to call Maine home. Portland has long been a city of immigrants and has recently welcomed new residents from across the globe, adding to the City's diversity.

Once a fishing port established in 1632, Portland offers historic 19th-century architecture juxtaposed with a blossoming entertainment and dining industry. With fairs and music festivals, endless opportunities for the outdoor enthusiast, locally sourced farm-to-table dining options, and all the arts, cultural, and recreational offerings of a big city with a small-town feel, Portland is truly an up-and-coming destination on the East Coast. The city is also home to the University of Southern Maine, Maine College of Art & Design, The Roux Institute of Northeastern University, and the University of New England, Portland campus (colleges of Dental Medicine, Pharmacy, Health Professions, and Osteopathic Medicine).

Portland sits on the traditional lands of the Waponahiyik (Wabankai People/Dawnland People), including the Mi'kmaq, Wolasttoqewiyik (Mailiseet), Panuwapskewiyik (Penobscot), Aponahkewiyik (Abenaki), Peskotomuhkatiyik (Passamaquoddy). GMRI recognizes that Portland's history exists before its establishment as an English colony.

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:

<https://www.imsearch.com/open-searches/gulf-maine-research-institute/director-individual-giving>

Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner (she/her)

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Isaacson, Miller

Research shows that people belonging to structurally marginalized groups often only apply to jobs if they meet 100% of the qualifications. As no one ever meets 100% of the qualifications, we encourage you to apply if you feel that most of the above qualifications reflect your experience and expertise.

Gulf of Maine Research Institute has a long-standing policy and commitment to providing equal access and equal employment opportunities in all terms, conditions, processes, and benefits of employment without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status. GMRI's employment decisions are made without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.

This document has been prepared based on the information provided by the Gulf of Maine Research Institute. 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 the Gulf of Maine Research Institute would supersede any conflicting information in this document.