



Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations
Gulf of Maine Research Institute
Portland, Maine

THE SEARCH

The [Gulf of Maine Research Institute](#) (GMRI) seeks a collaborative, strategic, and expert institutional fundraiser to serve as the director of corporate and foundation relations (director). Reporting to the chief development officer (CDO), the director will provide strategic leadership for GMRI's private institutional fundraising program, including foundation and corporate funding. The director will develop and execute a comprehensive fundraising strategy that strengthens GMRI's portfolio of philanthropic partnerships, expands institutional revenue, and positions the organization for sustained long-term investment.

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 private foundations and corporate funders whose investments protect our ocean, scaling the blue economy, and safeguarding the vitality of coastal communities.

Working collaboratively with scientists, program leaders, finance staff, and executive leadership, the director will oversee the full lifecycle of institutional fundraising—from prospect identification and relationship development through proposal strategy, grant development, stewardship, and renewal. The director will manage a portfolio of approximately 50-75 national, regional, and statewide foundations and corporations capable of making philanthropic investments of \$500,000 or more. Working in partnership with the CDO, the director ensures that institutional funding opportunities align with GMRI's strategic priorities and that proposals effectively communicate the organization's scientific excellence, measurable impact, and vision for the future.

The director will also lead GMRI's institutional fundraising staff and consultants—including providing leadership, coaching, and strategic guidance to a corporate relations manager—while serving as a trusted advisor to colleagues, volunteers, and program leaders across the organization. This individual will help build the systems, practices, and collaborative culture needed to sustain a high-performing grants and corporate relations program well beyond the current campaign, translating complex research and impact initiatives into compelling, fundable opportunities.

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 institutional giving and corporate relations will be central to making this shift possible. By building a best-in-class institutional giving and corporate relations 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

Strategic Fundraising and Relationship Management

- Develop and manage a portfolio of approximately 50-75 qualified corporate/foundation funders and prospects. Lead and support direct asks to meet funding needs, including gifts of \$100,000 or more and annual fundraising goals of \$2,000,000 or more once the portfolio is fully developed.
- Build and maintain long-term relationships with fundraising constituents, including foundation program managers and trustees, corporate representatives, board members, fundraising volunteers, and individual donors as needed.
- Design individualized cultivation, solicitation, stewardship, and recognition plans that connect funder interests with GMRI's mission, programs, and funding priorities.
- Persuasively convey GMRI's mission to diverse external audiences and confidently discuss corporate and foundation giving opportunities.

- Support and guide corporate and foundation relationships held by other development team members and GMRI leaders, including the CDO, CEO, program leads, and board members.

Corporate and Foundation Grants Strategy

- Partner with the CDO to lead the strategy, planning and execution of GMRI's corporate and foundation giving strategy, serving as lead relationship manager for high-level corporate partnerships, sponsors, and institutional funders.
- Acquire non-federal grant support from private foundations, family foundations/offices, corporations, and other grant-making nonprofit organizations.
- Maintain a detailed understanding of program funding needs across GMRI, identify funding gaps, and lead the pursuit of support through strategic grants, corporate partnerships, and sponsorships.
- Lead development of competitive proposals and support proposal mechanics, including case development, proposal budgets, writing, editing, and draft review.
- Serve as final editor for charitable letters of inquiry, proposals, and reports sent from the development department.
- Oversee research on corporate and foundation prospects with support from team members.

Leadership Operations and Cross-Functional Collaboration

- Provide leadership, coaching, and performance management for corporate and foundation relations staff, fostering a collaborative, high-performing culture grounded in accountability and continuous improvement.
- Collaborate with GMRI staff, especially program leads and the Sponsored Projects Office, to align funding opportunities with budget needs, program priorities, reporting requirements, and compliance obligations.
- Ensure compliance with GMRI policies and procedures and external donor, legal, IRS, grant, and sponsorship requirements.
- Maintain accurate filing systems within Box and Raiser's Edge NXT, and a reliable calendar of cultivation, stewardship, reporting, and recognition activities.
- Keep GMRI staff informed of grant-related news, reporting deadlines, funding opportunities, and training resources—fostering a culture of philanthropy and shared grant intelligence.

- Support the CDO to advance prioritized donor relationships with special writing projects, such as impact reports, endowment report narratives, campaign materials, case statements, and other development communications.

QUALIFICATIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS

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

- A bachelor's degree and a minimum of eight years of related experience, or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Experience building and maintaining long-term relationships with fundraising constituents and serving as a front-facing representative of an organization with donors, funders, corporate representatives, and partners.
- Experience asking for and closing gifts of \$100,000 or more and managing/tracking multiple prospects and donors.
- Experience with fundraising principles and practices, prospect research, cultivation and solicitation strategies, and current trends in charitable giving, including corporate partnerships and foundation grants.
- Experience working with cross-functional teams and communicating effectively with a wide range of stakeholders, including program staff, foundation staff and trustees, corporate representatives, board leadership, volunteers, and colleagues.
- Proven writing ability in a professional setting, including strong proofreading and editing skills; prior grant writing experience for a science or education organization is a strong plus.
- Self-discipline to meet deadlines, anticipate needs, manage competing priorities, and accomplish multiple tasks in a demanding environment.
- 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.

- Ability to determine an individual's or institution's interests, capacity, and potential for helping GMRI meet its goals, and to tie those interests to GMRI's work.

- Ability to design and manage comprehensive fundraising plans, including individualized cultivation, solicitation, reporting, stewardship, and recognition plans.
- Demonstrated ability to use listening, diplomacy, tact, and judgment to build strong relationships and motivate donors, funders, and volunteers.
- Working knowledge of corporate/foundation relations, charitable gift planning, prospect research, and proposal budget development.
- Proven ability to negotiate complex, high-profile, or sensitive agreements.
- Ability to work independently and as part of a broader team, with strong analytical, planning/time-management, and organizational skills.
- Understanding of the marine, scientific, and/or educational communities or market spaces.
- Experience working with marine, science, climate, or conservation funders is highly desirable.

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, Wolastoqewiyik (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-corporate-and-foundation-relations>

Rebecca Kennedy, Managing Partner (she/her)

Becky Piper, Managing Associate (she/her)

Marlyn Desire, Senior Search Coordinator (she/her)

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.