

Executive Director
Grow Smart Rhode Island

Location: Providence, RI

Full-Time

Starting Compensation \$90,000 to \$120,000

About Grow Smart Rhode Island

Grow Smart Rhode Island (GSRI) is a 27-year-old statewide nonprofit that works towards smart growth principles to build vibrant, inclusive, and resilient communities. We convene, advocate, and lead with integrity and innovation to shape policy, empower local leaders, and foster equitable development across Rhode Island. When we succeed, people live in Rhode Island communities where they feel safe, where they belong, and where they can thrive. The organization is based in Providence, RI with three full-time and two part-time staff, in addition to two contractors. GSRI is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

Position Summary

The Executive Director (ED) is a visionary and collaborative leader responsible for advancing GSRI's mission through strategic partnerships, organizational stewardship, and public engagement. This role is ideal for a systems thinker who thrives in a dynamic environment and is passionate about shaping Rhode Island's future through smart growth. The ED works closely with the Board of Directors (Board), staff, and external partners to ensure GSRI is fiscally sound, strategically aligned, and impactful in the statewide policy landscape and direct community technical assistance.

Being ED of GSRI is an especially challenging and rewarding role because of the multi-issue, multi constituency and systems change aspects of the organization. Beyond overseeing all the key elements of the organization, including fundraising, policy research and advocacy, communications, financial management and community programming, the Executive Director plays a key role in integrating GSRI's various coalition partners and areas of interest to maximize the organization's positive impact on Rhode Islanders' daily lives and on the health, economic vitality and affordability of RI's neighborhoods.

Currently a majority of the ED's time is devoted to fundraising, strategic planning, financial management and management of the Board and staff with less time allocated to policy advocacy, movement building, communications and community programming work.

Key Responsibilities

Strategic Leadership & Organizational Stewardship

- Oversees the setting of the priorities and plans for the organization.
- Leads the development and implementation of annual work plans and multi-year strategies aligned with GSRI's mission and vision and latest strategic plan.
- Acquires the necessary resources to maximize community impact and organizational sustainability. Work with the Executive Committee, especially the Board Chair and Treasurer, to manage cash flow and the overall finances of the organization.
- Collaborates with the Board Chair and Executive Committee to ensure effective governance, Board engagement, and strategic alignment.
- Works with the Board, the Executive Committee and other committees to develop strategic plans and priorities of GSRI and to maximize the effectiveness of the Board.

Team Leadership & Operations

- Leads a diverse and talented team of staff, contractors, and volunteers with a focus on collaboration, growth, and accountability.
- Ensures sound fiscal management, including budget development, overseeing financial reporting, and compliance with best accounting practices.
- Promotes a healthy, inclusive, and adaptive organizational culture.
- Ensure compliance with applicable laws and reporting requirements.

Development & Fundraising

- Serves as the chief fundraiser and fundraising strategist.
- Drives a diversified fundraising strategy including major donors, foundations, fee-for-service, government contracts, corporate memberships, and event sponsorships and registrations.
- Collaborates with Board and staff to cultivate donor relationships, obtain and maintain grants, and secure other sustainable funding.

Communications & Public Presence

- Serves as a primary spokesperson for GSRI, elevating its voice through media, public speaking, and strategic communications.
- Oversees staff efforts in a consistent and high-quality digital presence across web, email, and social media platforms.
- Supports staff and Board in representing GSRI across diverse venues and networks.
- Represents GSRI in local, state, and federal policy arenas. Testifies at legislative hearings and organizes others to do the same. Represents GSRI on various governmental and coalition task forces and committees.

Partnerships, Advocacy & Thought Leadership

- Cultivates and stewards relationships with policymakers, donors, community leaders, and our many community partners.
- With staff, advocates and influences decision-making for comprehensive smart growth supportive policies and funding.
- Stays current on best practices and other relevant smart growth trends and knowledge.
- Researches, writes, and develops key talking points for our state and local government and legislative allies and our community partners.

Program Oversight & Community Engagement

- Oversees the design and delivery of smart growth programming, including virtual convenings, in-person events, and community engagement initiatives including the Power of Place Summit, the Annual Awards Program, and other more issue specific convenings..
- Supports staff development of tools and resources that empower communities to lead proactive planning to navigate change.
- Convene and train concerned residents and various GSRI stakeholders to encourage their networking, collective smart growth advocacy, and implementation of smart growth techniques and tools.

Ideal Candidate Profile

We are looking for a leader who brings a balance of strategic vision, operational acumen, development, and relationship-building skills. The ideal candidate will have:

- Proven experience in nonprofit leadership, public policy, or community development.
- Strong fundraising experience.
- Good understanding of smart growth principles and Rhode Island's policy landscape.
- Exceptional communication and facilitation skills. Public speaking experience.
- Experience managing teams, budgets, and complex projects.
- Good capability working with technology.
- A collaborative spirit and the ability to inspire and mobilize others.

Flexible Leadership Model

This role is designed with flexibility in mind. GSRI recognizes the value of shared leadership and welcomes candidates who bring specific strengths—whether in policy, programming, or fundraising — and are eager to collaborate with other organizational leaders. The organization seeks to support the ED and will offer merit-based increases subject to budget constraints.

Compensation

Starting Salary \$90,000-\$120,000.

Benefits, effective upon commencing the position, include:

- Employer-paid health and dental insurance for employee. Additional coverage including family coverage is at the employee's expense.
- Hybrid work setting with three to four days in Providence office, coordinated with staff. Flexible hours to accommodate occasional evening and weekend work as needed.
- Annual paid time off:
 - Vacation begins at three weeks per year, increasing with tenure.
 - Twelve sick days
 - Three personal days
 - 14.5 Holidays

To Apply

Please submit a resume and cover letter detailing your interest and qualifications to the GSRI Search Committee at gsri.search@gmail.com. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis.