

## **Director of Development An Introduction**

Midland Empire Resources for Independent Living (MERIL) is a not-for-profit organization with headquarters in Saint Joseph, MO. Providing services throughout Northwest Missouri, MERIL serves a varied group of over 800 individuals with all types of disabilities. All resources at our disposal are clearly focused on creating “A Barrier Free Northwest Missouri.” Twelve leading indicators for such transformation have been identified. Measurements and benchmarks for the twelve indicators are currently being developed.

Innovation and collaboration have become hallmarks of MERIL. In this economic downturn we have chosen to reallocate, collaborate and innovate to thrive rather than cut to survive. We have chosen to lead not follow. We have advances not retreats. We consider all employees to be leaders not staff.

Throughout our first 16 years of existence MERIL’s revenue sources have consisted primarily of fees for service, federal and state grants and some very light fundraising.

Executive Team members at MERIL include the CEO, COO and CFO. Joining this trio of seasoned veterans 18 months ago was the Director of Community Relations. The incumbent in this position is one of the region’s most dynamic and respected leaders. “Friend Raising” and brand development have been her focus. Today MERIL enjoys very positive name recognition and ever increasing referrals and collaborative partners.

With the creation of the Director of Development position comes our initial effort at a full-fledged financial development program. We are primed and ready for the right person to fill this new position and become the newest member of “the dream team” of executive leadership.

The key to our most recent success is a dynamic and progressive Board that has a clear focus on the “other side of the horizon” pointing the way rather than a “rear view mirror” focus of reacting and ratifying.

With roughly 80% of our Board and 55% of the leadership team (employees) having a disability, we are indeed an organization that is governed and operated by people with disabilities. The mantra of “nothing about us without us” is very much alive at MERIL.

MERIL operates on an annual budget of \$7.5M. Grants and contributions make up less than 5% of the current budget. The balance comes from fees for service. The primary development objectives include a plan to enhance the ratio of non-fee for service revenue, secure startup funding for new programs, startup funding for a research and training subsidiary as well as the development of endowed funds and a capital campaign. To address the opportunities before us MERIL seeks an accomplished Director of Development (DOD) who brings strategic focus, leadership and demonstrated success in securing charitable contributions that support our vision.

The Director of Development will foster a culture of philanthropy and create from ground up a donor-centered organization that nurtures loyalty through a comprehensive relationship building

program including cultivation, solicitation and communications.

*To learn more about MERIL visit us at: [www.meril.org](http://www.meril.org). Please pardon the looks and functioning of our current website as it is in the midst of a complete makeover.*

## **Requirements**

The ideal candidate for the Director of Development position will have 10 years of progressively responsible and effective financial development experience leading successful annual, major gift and/or capital/ endowment campaigns or grants procurement. Experience could include work with an academic, cultural, medical, or social service not-for-profit organization or as a trust officer in the banking industry. A proven track record delivering compelling and sustained results is essential. Master's degree is preferred.

### **The specific professional and personal competencies include the following:**

- A deep understanding of fundraising techniques, communications, and donor and volunteer motivations is a must. Experience should include face-to-face solicitations, capital and endowment campaign management, proposal writing and special events.
- The Director of Development must be a fiscally savvy individual who understands the complexity of donor-centered fundraising and will need to display the skills necessary to interconnect development efforts within the operating infrastructure of MERIL.
- The successful candidate must be strategic and able to create a plan of action for development that balances the long and short term needs and capabilities of MERIL. The ability to think broadly regarding the strengths, opportunities and challenges relative to setting realistic goals and the action plan to achieve them is essential.
- The Director of Development must be as a positive and energetic leader whom others turn to in getting things done and lead by example through personal effort and initiative.
- The successful candidate will have well-developed oral and written communication skills and will also be a strategic listener. This individual will be accomplished at making a compelling case that is credible, effective and relevant to donors.
- The Director of Development will have a track record of embracing a collaborative work style that encourages partnership. Key to this will be an ability to build and manage dynamic internal and external relationships with a broad constituency including executive leadership, the board, staff, program participants and the philanthropic community.
- The Director of Development must have an understanding of and appreciation for the Independent Living movement as it relates to people with disabilities.

Qualified candidates are encouraged to send a personal letter of introduction along with a detailed resume' to [DOD@meril.org](mailto:DOD@meril.org) with "DOD Candidate – (your name)" in the subject line. Qualified candidates with a disability or minorities are highly encouraged to apply. Candidate inquiries will be received until the position is filled.