

CRAIG L. BLAIS

PRESIDENT

ABOUT

As President of the Worcester Business Development Corporation (WBDC), Craig brings years of experience and a wealth of expertise to the position.

Craig oversees the \$10 million non-profit whose mission is to promote the common good and general welfare of the City of Worcester and the region by being the leading force for economic development with a focus on urban development.

Craig works with public and private partners to complete high impact projects, that for any number of reasons, the conventional market will not take on. The organization's partners include government and quasi-government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels, funders, lenders, property and landowners, and construction and design companies.

Under Craig's leadership, the WBDC has grown from a \$2M organization to more than \$66M. This incredible growth has resulted in a more robust tax base and many thousands of new jobs. For additional sources of income, Craig established a fee-for-service department providing project management services for private developers, institutions, and municipalities. The WBDC's SBA 504 Loan Program also generates revenue for the organization and is an important piece of the economic development toolbox by providing capital to help small businesses expand.

One of Craig's proudest accomplishments is the recent development of a 46-acre biomanufacturing park, known as The Reactory. In addition to the typical permitting and build out challenges, the land acquisition process required a complex series of steps that included passing state legislation, enduring a bidding process, and obtaining financing.

Another complicated project was the redevelopment of the former Telegram & Gazette building in downtown Worcester. This \$42M development required new market tax credits to save the building as part of the Theatre District Master Plan. After funding was secured, the 132,000 SF building was fully rehabilitated making way for the building's adaptive reuse as academic and office space, a business incubator, and a black box theater.

PRIOR EXPERIENCE

Craig's career began in 1986 at the State House as Chief of Staff for the House of Representatives. In 1992, Craig became the Assistant Town Manager for Arlington where his responsibilities included a \$60M operating and capital municipal budget. He served three consecutive terms as Selectman in the Town of Auburn. Craig also served in various economic development positions for the City of Worcester including the Director of Economic Development where he oversaw a \$1B economic development budget.

EDUCATION AND CERTIFICATIONS

Craig earned a bachelor's degree in economics with a minor in political science and a Master of Public Administration from Framingham State University.

Craig serves on the Board of Directors for Massachusetts Biomedical Initiatives, the Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce, and is immediate past Chair of the Worcester State University Board of Trustees.

Craig enjoys spending time with his wife, son, and daughter and is an avid golfer, fisherman and skier.

