



Laith Wardi Bio

Laith Wardi, CEcD, has worked in the economic development profession for over 30 years.

He started his career in Erie County, Pennsylvania—focusing on entrepreneurial development and business retention & expansion (BRE) outreach initiatives. He later transitioned into regional management of an eight-county BRE program across Northwest Pennsylvania.

In 2000, Laith founded ExecutivePulse, Inc.—a CRM provider to thousands of economic development, government, and allied professionals across North America and beyond. He sold that firm in 2025 and started Gem City Growth Strategies—an economic development consulting and strategy services company.

In 2002, Laith received his economic development certification (CEcD) through The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) in Washington, DC. He provided certification training for that organization from 1996 to 2025. During his tenure with them, Laith trained roughly 10,000 economic development professionals on best practices business retention & expansion strategies, tools, and tactics. In 2024, he cowrote the current BRE certification manual for IEDC.

Laith is a longtime instructor for the industry's other main education and governing body, Oklahoma University's Economic Development Institute (OUEDI). Each year, he conducts two eight-week online business retention & expansion courses for that organization. He also created the certification curriculum for this course of study.

Laith is a frequent speaker and presenter to economic development and allied audiences throughout the US and Canada on globalization, talent/workforce, resiliency, and AI/technology assimilation topics. He conducts certification training for a number of states and has done limited speaking and training engagements in Europe and Mexico as well.

Laith has sat on many community and economic development boards in Northwest Pennsylvania. Currently, he serves on both The Tom Ridge Environmental Center and Millcreek Township General Authority.

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