

MARITIME ADMINISTRATION
U.S. Department of Transportation

Center of Excellence (CoE) for Domestic Workforce Training and Education

Argonaut – Cleveland, Ohio

The Secretary of Transportation designates Cleveland-based Argonaut, a structured experiential learning training program, as a 2026 Center of Excellence for embedding Federal maritime credentialing pathways into an accredited high school curriculum. By linking secondary education, active harbor operations, and national capacity scaling, Argonaut provides a repeatable model for transitioning regional talent into disciplined merchant mariners and public safety professionals ready to support the domestic maritime transportation system.

Operational Footprint & Assets

Argonaut delivers daily practical maritime training on the Cleveland waterfront.

- **Port Infrastructure:** Holds dual service contracts with the Port of Cleveland for Harbor Waterway Management and Harbor Safety and Rescue. Trainees crew active debris-harvesting vessels *Flotsam* and *Jetsam*, earning commercial sea time under a licensed Lead Captain.
- **Federal Certification:** Partners with Practical Navigator Training as a U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)-approved classroom alternate site, delivering hybrid tracks for Master 100 Tons, Assistance Towing, and Auxiliary Sail endorsements.
- **Tactical Lifesaving:** Maintains a 95 percent pass rate across public safety tracks certified under National Fire Protection Association Water Rescue, Emergency Medical Responder, and United States Lifesaving Association Open Water Lifeguard standards.

Workforce & Regional Impact

Delivers immediate proof of capability to regional employers, turning out entry-level mariners with real-world sea time logged on active harbor operations.

- **The High-School-to-Fleet Pipeline:** Within its 300-student capacity, 30 percent of graduates enter maritime berths immediately. Of the 41 percent deploying with a confirmed workforce plan, 90 percent enter the maritime, aerospace, or logistics sectors.
- **Commercial Fleet Alignment:** Partners with Interlake Maritime Services to place advanced seniors into 60-day paid shipboard internships across deck, engine, and steward departments of active Lake Freighters.
- **Pipeline Progression:** Transitions personnel directly into the USCG, Navy, Great Lakes Maritime Academy, Massachusetts Maritime Academy, and advanced Qualified Member of the Engine Department (QMED) or Able Seafarer tracks.

Strategic Outlook

Argonaut is transitioning to a dedicated community school model to expand post-secondary retraining and scale workforce throughput. The centerpiece is a planned \$7 million+ waterfront facility engineered for Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping, Able Seafarer, and QMED certifications. Backed by a centralized alumni tracking database, this model serves as a scalable regional hub to mobilize certified personnel rapidly during national emergencies.