

MARITIME ADMINISTRATION
U.S. Department of Transportation
Center of Excellence (CoE) for Domestic Workforce Training and Education

Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College – Perkinston, Mississippi

The Secretary of Transportation redesignates Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) as a Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education (CoE) for its leadership in shipbuilding apprenticeships, autonomous systems training, and defense manufacturing partnerships. Serving George, Harrison, Jackson, and Stone counties across ten regional locations, MGCCC is the primary workforce engine for the region's surface combatant and autonomous vessel construction hubs.

Operational Footprint & Assets

Delivers technical degree tracks, registered apprenticeships, and simulation infrastructure tailored to naval and commercial shipbuilding.

- **Haley Reeves Barbour Maritime Training Academy (MTA):** \$25 million facility in Pascagoula, MS, serving as the training hub for regional shipyard apprenticeships.
- **Shipbuilding Apprenticeship Sponsorship:** Official U.S. DOL sponsor for two major shipyard schools:
 - **Ingalls Apprentice School:** 70-year partnership training 600+ active apprentices across 14 craft disciplines (e.g., pipe welders, shipfitters, marine electricians).
 - **Halter Marine Apprentice School:** Sponsors 50+ apprentices across 11 craft areas focused on ocean-going vessel construction.
 - **Credit Degree Pathways:** Grants stackable certificates, diplomas, and A.A.S. degrees in Maritime Multi-craft, Unmanned Maritime Systems, Electrical, Precision Machining, Welding, Automation/Controls, and Instrumentation.
 - **Simulation Labs & Accreditation:** Employs VR/AR technology, virtual welders, cobots, and heavy equipment simulators. Accredited by SACSCOC and authorized by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Apprenticeship.

Workforce & Regional Impact

Directly powers the Gulf Coast defense base, producer of nearly 70% of U.S. Navy surface warships.

- **Industry Placement & Performance:** Achieves 79% to 95% technical skill attainment and job placement rates across credit maritime programs.
- **Ingalls Shipbuilder Academy:** Partners with 8 regional school districts to provide high school students up to 9 dual-enrollment college credits and direct entry into full-time shipyard apprenticeships upon graduation.
- **District & K-12 STEM Outreach:** Exposes 6,000+ 8th graders annually to maritime careers via hands-on simulators at *Pathways 2 Possibilities* alongside Ingalls and Bollinger. Hosts *Experience CTE*, *Bulldog Day*, *Krewe of Blue*, and the *MS-SHIPS* manufacturing project.
- **Regional Industrial Hub:** Supports Huntington Ingalls Industries (MS's largest private employer), Port of Gulfport, Chevron Pascagoula Refinery, Stennis Space Center, and NOAA's Unmanned Systems Operations Center.

Strategic Outlook

Aligned with the *National Defense Strategy* and the *Statewide Defense Strategic Plan*, MGCCC advances the region as a hub for autonomous aquatic and aerial systems. By cross walking apprenticeships into A.A.S. degrees, expanding BAS transfer pathways with the University of Southern Mississippi, and integrating virtual simulation, MGCCC maintains an agile workforce pipeline for next-generation naval and autonomous vessel production.