

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

STAR Center – Dania Beach, Florida

The Secretary of Transportation redesignates the American Maritime Officers Safety and Education Plan d.b.a. STAR Center as a Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education (CoE) for its advanced simulation capabilities, specialized engineering apprentice tracks, and extensive STCW credentialing programs. Located in Dania Beach, Florida, STAR Center offers more U.S. Coast Guard (USCG) and flag-approved courses than any other private simulation facility in the nation, serving as a primary training and upskilling hub for domestic and international U.S.-flagged fleets.

Operational Footprint & Assets

STAR Center's high-density instructional framework combines full-mission maritime simulation suites, heavy engineering laboratories, and state-approved vocational pathways.

- **The TECH Apprentice Program (USCG Approval STRCTR-519):** Operates the nation's only private USCG-approved Third Assistant Engineer hawsepole apprenticeship—a 2-year (104-week / 4,160-hour) co-op program combining 52 weeks of intensive shoreside instruction with 52 weeks of structured sea service aboard U.S.-flagged vessels.
- **World-Class Simulation Infrastructure:** Operates ISO 9001:2015 certified simulation suites featuring a 360° full-mission navigation bridge, Kongsberg full-mission engine room control centers, liquid cargo simulators, diesel-electric power management units, and a waterfront launch/recovery basin.
- **Advanced Electrical & High-Voltage Labs:** Delivers specialized STCW management and rating courses, including Management of Electrical & Electronic Control Equipment, Electro-Technical Officer tracks, and high-voltage power system labs operating up to 15 kV.

Workforce & Regional Impact

STAR Center serves as a major national talent pipeline, directly filling critical officer billets for commercial carriers, military sealift fleets, and regional maritime programs.

- **Audited USCG Certification Output:** Issued 7,602 total certificates for USCG-approved courses from 2021 through 2024, maintaining strong annual volume.
- **High Retention & Immediate Employment:** Achieves a 100% immediate post-program employment rate for TECH Program graduates, demonstrating a 5-year mariner retention rate that is 26.6% higher than traditional maritime academy benchmarks.
- **Management Upgrade & Fleet Support:** Has trained over 950 officer upgrade participants since 2017, assisting 90%+ of candidates with securing immediate Chief Mate or First Assistant Engineer endorsements for commercial partners such as Crowley, TOTE Services, SeaBulk, and Pasha Hawaii.
- **K-12 Youth Outreach & Sponsorship:** Sponsors the "Sea The World" marine industry storefront at the Junior Achievement of South Florida JA World Huizenga Center in Coconut Creek, using augmented reality and interactive exhibits to introduce over 20,000 eighth-grade

students annually to seagoing and shoreside maritime career pathways.

- **Military-to-Mariner (M2M) & Veteran Pathways:** Holds VA approval under 38 U.S.C. 3676 to support transitioning service members, offering streamlined credentialing and credit evaluations for military sea service.

Strategic Outlook

To resolve acute industry-wide mariner shortages, STAR Center launched a specialized STCW Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch (OICEW) program and continually expands its blended/online distance learning offerings. By expanding its visual and hydrodynamic modeling capacity for port research and forensic maritime studies, alongside new alternative-fuel (IGF Code/LNG) training, STAR Center reinforces U.S. maritime defense readiness and ensures merchant mariners remain trained to the highest international safety standards.