

MARITIME ADMINISTRATION
U.S. Department of Transportation

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

Seaman's Church Institute – Paducah, Kentucky and Houston, Texas

The Secretary of Transportation designates the Seamen's Church Institute (SCI) a 2026 Center of Excellence to recognize its long history of giving mariners clear, structured pathways to advance their professional licenses. SCI's training centers develop realistic, simulator-driven courses alongside active shipping companies. Emphasizing live ship handling and wheelhouse safety, SCI enables mariners to upgrade their credentials and transition into maritime leadership roles.

Operational Footprint & Assets

The school pairs two physical campuses with an e-learning portal and engineering technical service divisions.

- **Advanced Simulator Core:** Connects multiple full-mission navigation bridges using the Kongsberg K-SIM layout for immersive, 360-degree pilot and tug training.
- **Hydrodynamic Prototyping:** Employs precise six-degrees-of-freedom (6DOF) models that mirror bulk towboat and supertanker handling under changing currents.
- **Turn-Key E-Learning:** Manages a self-paced digital course library for rules of the road and compliance, featuring automated performance logging.
- **Professional Testing Nodes:** Serves as a validated site for U.S. Coast Guard license evaluations, radar recertifications, and Designated Examiner courses.

Workforce & Regional Impact

The program serves as a primary employment funnel, transitioning personnel into high-tier logistics roles across the Mississippi River and Gulf systems.

- **Upskilling Scale:** Logged 5,840 participant completions across 715 training sessions from early 2023 through 2026.
- **Fleet Alliances:** Maintains long-term training agreements with major operators, including Kirby Corporation, American Commercial Barge Line, and Ingram Barge Company. to co-develop custom scenarios.
- **Career Milestones:** Tailors curriculum to captain and pilot requirements, delivering 3,600 completions in advanced pilothouse operations and 1,715 in examiner validation.

Strategic Outlook

SCI pairs advanced simulation with original research to improve heartland fleet safety and retention. Through studies like the *U.S. Inland Mariner Wellness Assessment*, the institute provides data-driven tools to improve mariner health and reduce human error. Under emergency surge demands, SCI can launch crisis operations within 30 days ensuring vital supply links and riverways stay open.