

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

West Kentucky Community and Technical College – Paducah, Kentucky

The Secretary of Transportation redesignates West Kentucky Community and Technical College (WKCTC) as a Center of Excellence for Domestic Maritime Workforce Training and Education (CoE) for its leadership in inland waterways training, comprehensive Marine Technology degree tracks, and innovative workforce re-entry partnerships. Located in Paducah at the confluence of the Ohio and Tennessee Rivers along the Mississippi River System, the nation's central inland towing hub, WKCTC provides vital academic and technical pathways supporting U.S. inland commerce.

Operational Footprint & Assets

WKCTC's maritime infrastructure combines online degree access with heavy technical laboratory environments at its Marine Way Training Center (MWTC).

- **Associate Degree & Stacked Certificates:** Awards an Associate in Applied Science (AAS) in Marine Technology across four specialized tracks: Wheelhouse Management, Marine Engineering, Marine Logistics Operations, and Marine Culinary Management. Offers stackable certificates in Marine Engineering, Marine Industry, Marine Technology Business, and Marine Culinary.
- **Marine Way Training Center (MWTC):** Operates a dedicated 7,680 sq. ft. maritime training facility housing specialized navigation classrooms and a simulation lab. Facility assets feature six simulated shipboard galley stations and a refurbished, operational 16-cylinder EMD marine diesel engine donated by industry partners.
- **USCG Approvals & Military Articulation:** Delivers USCG-approved courses including Radar Observer (Inland/Rivers/Unlimited), Basic & Advanced Firefighting, Tankerman Dangerous Liquids, and Vessel Personnel with Designated Security Duties (VPDSD). Grants college credit for prior learning to USCG, US Navy, and US Army watercraft veterans.

Workforce & Regional Impact

Serves as a primary workforce development hub for major inland towing operators, commercial fleets, and regional workforce boards.

- **Inland Fleet Partnerships:** Delivers customized upskilling and corporate tuition-reimbursement programs for major towing and logistics firms, including Marquette Transportation, Hines Furlong Line, Archer Daniels Midland (ARTCO Fleeting), and Ingram Barge Line.
- **Workforce Retention & Outcomes:** Achieved an 80% fall-to-spring student retention rate and a verified 100% post-credential employment rate within six months among working mariners seeking career advancement.
- **Community Re-Entry & Recidivism Reduction:** Partnered with the McCracken County Regional Jail under a Delta Regional Authority (DRA) grant to deliver specialized deckhand and technical training for incarcerated individuals, achieving a 60% reduction in regional recidivism.

- **Mississippi River Consortium:** Serves as a key member of the Mississippi River Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics (MTRDL) Consortium and collaborates with the Kentucky Chamber Talent Pipeline Management (TPM) initiative to resolve critical mariner shortages.

Strategic Outlook

Supported by national recognition as an Aspen Prize Top 10 Community College and a major \$15M philanthropic endowment targeting workforce equity, WKCTC continues to expand its online and open-enrollment training platforms. By launching new USCG Steersman courses and expanding technical tracks in marine diesel and electrical maintenance, WKCTC ensures a resilient, highly trained workforce essential to securing the operational continuity of America's inland waterway logistics network.