



2026 Impact Report

Expanding Awareness. Building the Maritime Workforce.

Reporting Period: July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026



Building Momentum Nationwide

A Message from our Executive Director

To our partners, supporters, educators, and industry champions,

What a year it has been.

From July 2025 through June 2026, We Work the Waterways experienced tremendous growth and continued to build momentum across the country. As our team expanded, so did our ability to connect students, educators, and industry partners with the opportunities that exist throughout the maritime industry.

This year brought new partnerships, deeper engagement with federal agencies and industry leaders, and growing recognition of the important role workforce development plays in the future of our waterways. We expanded into new regions, strengthened our leadership structure, and continued to elevate conversations around maritime careers at the local, regional, and national levels.

One of the milestones I am most proud of is the continued growth of our Career Hub, which has become an increasingly valuable resource for students, educators, and those exploring careers on and around the water.

As we look ahead, our goal remains clear: to ensure maritime careers are visible, attainable, and valued. The need for the next generation of talent has never been greater, and we are excited about the opportunities ahead.

This year has been defined by growth, collaboration, and a shared commitment to building the future maritime workforce. Thank you for being part of this journey and for believing in the work we do.

Together, we are helping the next generation navigate their path and build their future.



With gratitude,

Errin Howard

Errin Howard
Executive Director
We Work the Waterways

Reporting Period: This report highlights the impact of We Work the Waterways from July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2026 and serves as our annual review of organizational growth, programs, partnerships, and workforce development efforts.

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01

Mission in Momentum

WE WORK THE WATERWAYS
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**"No company alone
could have the impact
that your organization is
having on the industry."**

Ashley Sorrells
E.N. Bisso & Sons

Who We Are

Our Mission and Purpose



It All Starts with Awareness

At the heart of We Work the Waterways is a simple but urgent belief:

You can't choose a career you've never heard of.

Too many people, whether students just beginning their journey or adults searching for a new direction, miss out on maritime careers simply because they've never seen what's possible. These jobs are vital to our economy and our communities—but they're often hidden from view. We're here to change that.

What We Do

We connect people to the maritime industry through immersive, hands-on experiences that spark curiosity and build confidence. From classrooms and ports to industry events and the Career Hub, we help individuals explore what's out there and see themselves in it.

While employers and training programs focus on recruitment, our work starts earlier. We build awareness, provide exposure, and foster connection. By doing so, we lay the groundwork for a stronger, more inclusive talent pipeline rooted in understanding and opportunity.



Maritime Interaction Day Events

[Learn More on Page 9](#)



Community Awareness & Education

[Learn More on Page 10](#)



Industry Engagement & Outreach

[Learn More on Page 11](#)



Digital Reach & Awareness

[Learn More on Page 13](#)

Our Mission

To connect the next generation with careers in maritime, shipping, and logistics while fostering lasting appreciation for the industry, its people, and its impact on our environment and economy.

Our Growth & National Reach

What began as a regional effort continues to grow into a national movement. Through programs, partnerships, and digital resources, We Work the Waterways is connecting more communities to maritime opportunities nationwide.

Today, the organization has reached 17 states, with demand extending into 24 states across the country, reflecting the growing need for maritime workforce awareness and connection.

Milestones That Moved Us Forward

Independent Nonprofit

Celebrated one year as an independent nonprofit while continuing a 20-year mission to expand maritime career awareness and workforce pathways.

Maritime Action Plans

Following the release of the U.S. Maritime Action Plan, Michigan and Ohio incorporated We Work the Waterways into their state maritime workforce development plans.

Digital Growth

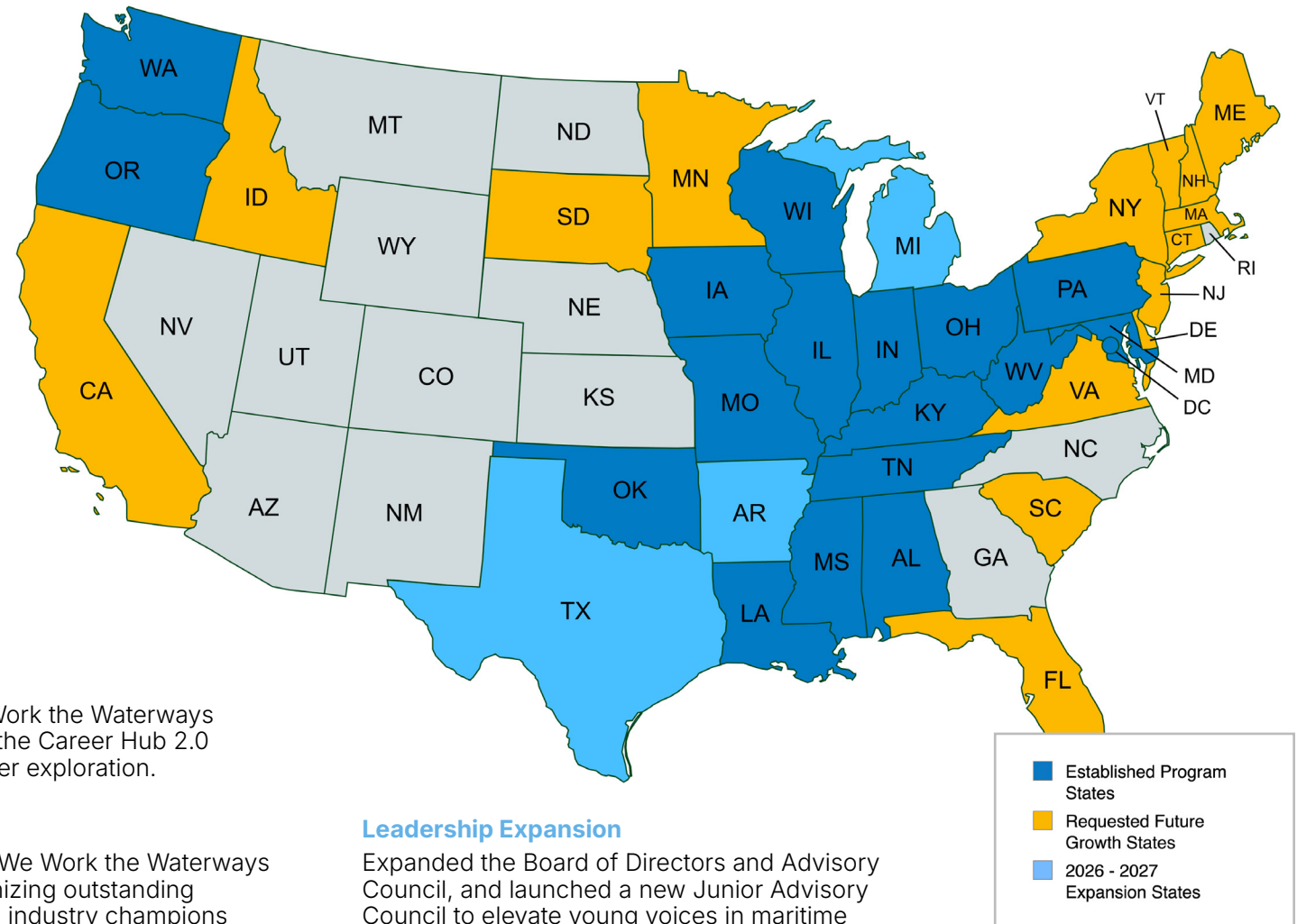
Launched the new We Work the Waterways website and introduced the Career Hub 2.0 to expand maritime career exploration.

Awards Program

Launched the inaugural We Work the Waterways Awards Program, recognizing outstanding partners, educators, and industry champions supporting maritime workforce development.

Leadership Expansion

Expanded the Board of Directors and Advisory Council, and launched a new Junior Advisory Council to elevate young voices in maritime workforce development.



20

Years Advancing the Mission

17

States, Plus Our Nation's Capital

12K+

Students Engaged & Counting

24K+

Social Media Followers

84

Annual Events Nationwide

325

Industry Supporters
& Partners

How We Create Impact

The PROPEL Framework

Impact doesn't happen by accident. It comes from clear priorities, intentional action, and a deep commitment to progress. PROPEL is the framework that keeps us focused and aligned. It shapes how we engage, where we invest, and the outcomes we work to achieve.



People

Connecting students, career seekers, and communities to the maritime workforce



Resources

Equipping educators, companies, and collaborators with meaningful tools



Opportunities

Creating impact by expanding access, awareness, and connection



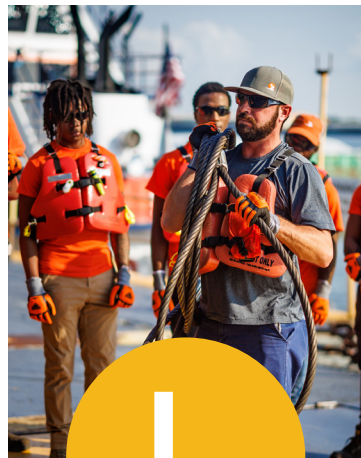
Partnerships

Collaborating with schools, industry, government, and environmental groups



Education

Building awareness of maritime careers and the importance of our waterways



Leadership

Elevating voices from within the industry to inspire the next generation

02

Impact in Action

WE WORK THE WATERWAYS
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"We keep showing up because this is our future."

Mitchell Moore
Maintenance Manager, ADM

By the Numbers

12 Months of Impact

Since launching in January 2024, We Work the Waterways has significantly grown our reach—connecting students, schools and communities to some of America's most vital and rewarding careers. The numbers below reflect our commitment to building stronger talent pipelines, more resilient supply chains, and a brighter maritime future.



160
Schools Engaged
Across 13 states
and growing



23K
Unique Website Visitors
Exploring maritime
careers and resources

37K
People Reached
Across events, conferences
& community engagements



9.1M
Social Impressions
Expanding awareness of
maritime careers nationwide



Maritime Interaction Day Events

Our Flagship Experience

Where Exploration Meets Industry

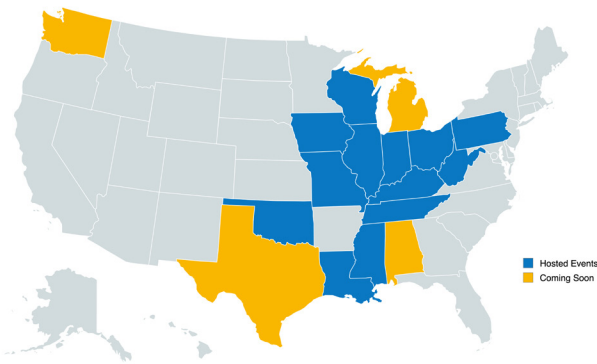
Maritime Interaction Day events are high-energy experiences that introduce students to the many careers that power America’s waterways. Through hands-on learning, direct interaction with industry professionals, and career exploration, students discover opportunities they may have never known existed.

Turning Curiosity Into Career Paths

Every conversation, demonstration, and hands-on activity helps students see themselves in maritime careers. By connecting students with industry professionals and real-world experiences, these events turn awareness into inspiration and future career exploration.

4,700+ Students Attended

25 Maritime Interaction Days Across 13 States



4.3

★★★★★

Average Event Rating



What are Students Saying?

68%

Had never heard of maritime careers before attending

94%

Learned something new about the maritime industry

84%

Received helpful career advice or inspiration

56%

Sought additional training and career resources



Community Awareness & Education

Connecting Communities to Maritime Opportunities

34

Events Across
the U.S.

12K+

Students & Career
Seekers Reached



Bridge To The Future Walks

Vicksburg, Mississippi

This spring, students walked across the historic Old Vicksburg Bridge while learning about the Mississippi River, its role in the local economy, and the many maritime careers connected to the waterways in their own community. The experience encouraged students to see the river not just as a local landmark, but as a gateway to career opportunities that support the region and the nation.

Why It Matters: Students connected what they learned about the Mississippi River to real career opportunities in their own community.



Junior Achievement Trades Event

Baton Rouge, Louisiana

At the Junior Achievement Trades Event, students built confidence through an interactive Elevator Pitch station focused on communication and professional skills. High school students who previously participated in WWW programs returned as mentors, helping guide younger students through the experience and demonstrating the value of leadership, confidence, and workforce readiness.

Why It Matters: Students built confidence and workforce readiness skills while learning how effective communication can open doors to future opportunities.



Snake River Family Festival

Colfax, Washington

Through the hands-on Build-A-Barge activity at the Snake River Family Festival, students and families explored maritime concepts through STEM learning and experimentation while discovering the many careers connected to the industry. Participants designed and tested miniature barges while learning how science, engineering, and problem-solving play a role in the movement of goods along our nation's waterways.

Why It Matters: Hands-on STEM activities sparked curiosity and introduced students and families to the many careers connected to the maritime industry.

Industry Engagement & Outreach

Building Awareness Through Industry Engagement

25

Conferences,
Exhibits & Speaking
Engagements

9K+

Industry
Professionals
Reached



Inland Marine Expo (IMX) Workforce Panel

Nashville, Tennessee

At the Inland Marine Expo, We Work the Waterways hosted and organized a workforce development panel focused on recruitment, awareness, and the future maritime talent pipeline. The session brought together industry leaders to discuss workforce challenges and share ideas for strengthening the next generation of maritime professionals.

Why It Matters: Industry leaders are increasingly looking to We Work the Waterways to help lead workforce development conversations and drive collaborative solutions.



Career Discovery Day

Mobile, Alabama

Career Discovery Day connected students with maritime industry professionals and resources while introducing them to the wide range of careers available throughout the industry. Through conversations and hands-on engagement, students gained exposure to opportunities they may not have otherwise encountered.

Why It Matters: Direct interaction with industry professionals helps students better understand career pathways and workforce opportunities.



National Maritime Day

Washington, DC

National Maritime Day brought together maritime leaders, organizations, and stakeholders from across the country to celebrate the industry's impact and discuss its future. Participation in the event provided opportunities to strengthen relationships while highlighting the importance of workforce development.

Why It Matters: National engagement helps strengthen partnerships and elevate awareness of maritime workforce priorities.

"I attended this session and found it to be very well done. Workforce recruitment and development is a critical issue and the lifeblood for the maritime industry." - Chris Carr (IMX Workforce Panel Attendee)

Advancing Maritime Workforce Priorities

Helping Shape the Future of the Industry

As awareness of workforce challenges grows, We Work the Waterways is increasingly being invited to contribute to conversations shaping the future of the maritime industry. Through partnerships, presentations, and collaboration with industry and government leaders, we are helping elevate maritime career awareness and workforce development priorities nationwide.

Recognition



3 Communities Issued National Maritime Day Resolutions

Plaquemines Parish, Vicksburg, and the Central Ohio River Business Association formally recognized National Maritime Day and honored We Work the Waterways for advancing maritime awareness in their communities.

Partnership Growth



200+ Students Reached Through MARAD Partnership

WWW partnered with MARAD at the Sea Air Space STEM Expo in Washington, DC, introducing students to maritime careers alongside federal agencies and industry leaders.

Growing Influence



Included in State Maritime Action Plans

As workforce awareness gains momentum, WWW's work is being recognized as part of broader maritime workforce discussions, including participation in state planning efforts in Ohio and Michigan.

Convening Power



Federal & Industry Leaders Engaged

Through meetings with the Department of Labor, USACE, USCG, MARAD, and industry stakeholders, WWW continues to contribute to conversations shaping workforce development priorities across the maritime sector.

Digital Reach & Awareness

Bringing Maritime Careers to New Audiences

Awareness is the first step in every career journey. Through social media, digital content, email outreach, and online resources, We Work the Waterways reaches new audiences each day, helping students, educators, and career seekers discover the maritime industry and take the next step toward opportunity.



9.1M

Social Views

Across [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#), and [TikTok](#), introducing maritime careers to new audiences.



24K

Social Followers

A growing community of students, educators, industry professionals, and supporters connected to the mission.



98

Countries Reached

Including all 50 U.S. states, expanding awareness of maritime careers far beyond traditional port communities.



22K

Emails Delivered

With a 45% open rate, connecting educators, students, and supporters with opportunities and resources.

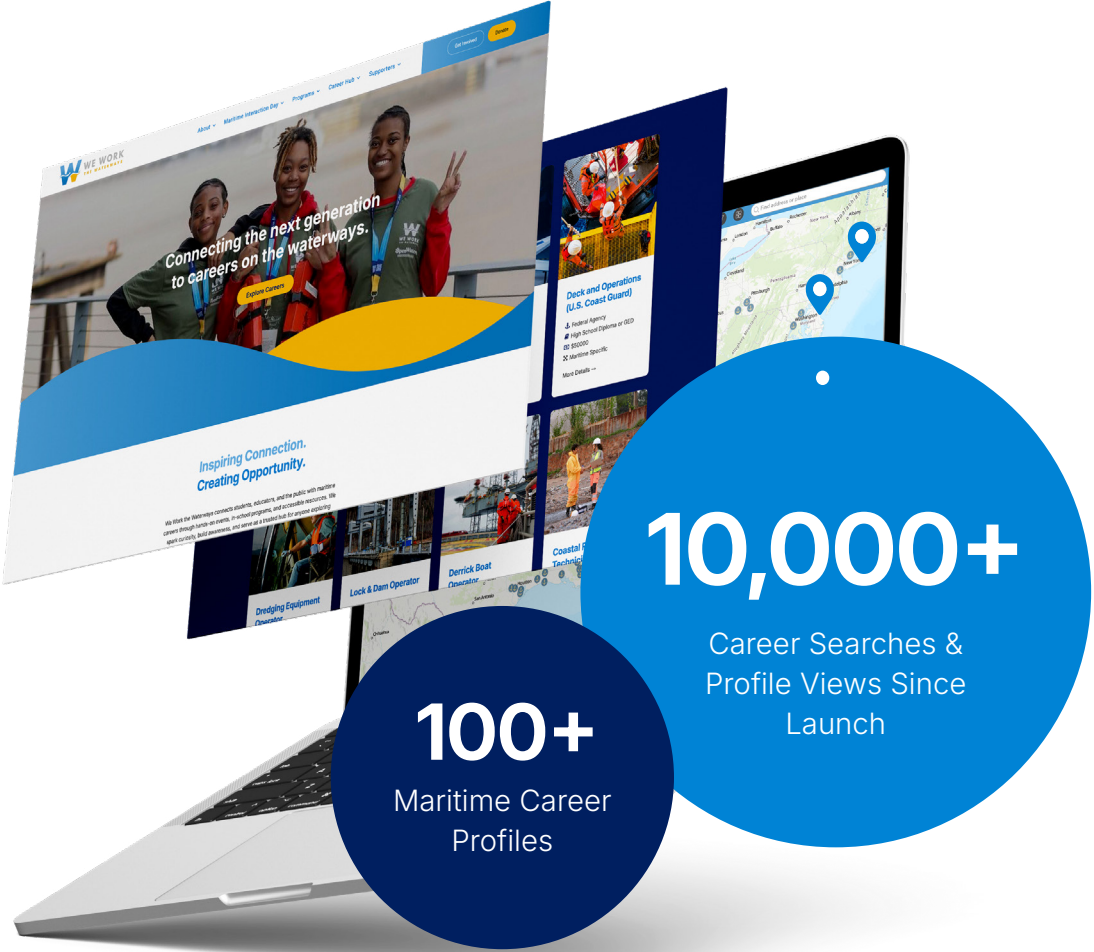
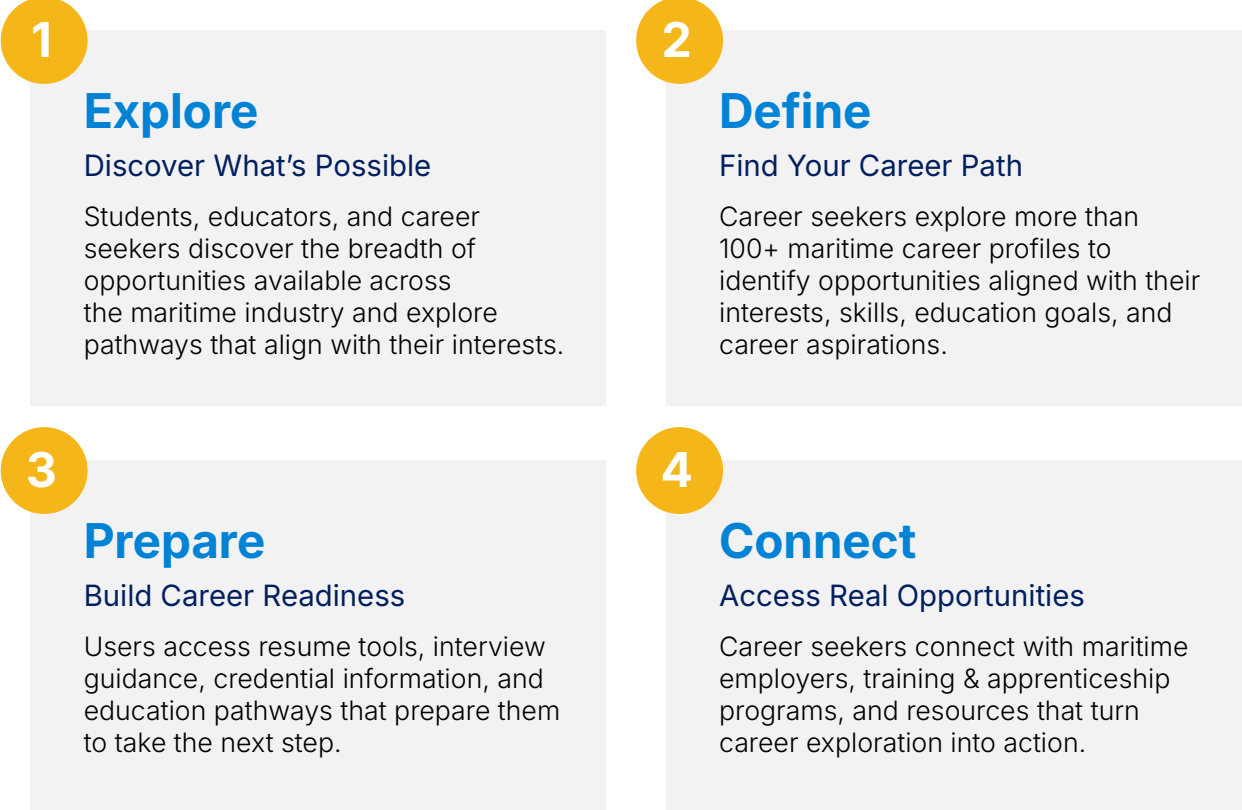


Career Hub

Turning Awareness Into Opportunity

Launched in November 2025, the We Work the Waterways Career Hub transforms career awareness into career action by providing the tools, resources, and industry connections needed to pursue maritime careers. Designed for students, educators, and career seekers, the Career Hub makes maritime opportunities easier to discover and pursue through every stage of the journey, from discovery to employment.

Career Hub Experience



Career Hub At-a-Glance

- ✔ 100+ Maritime Career Profiles
- ✔ 9 Career Pathways
- ✔ Search by Salary, Education & Transferable Skills
- ✔ Interactive Opportunity Map
- ✔ Employer, Training & Apprenticeship Links
- ✔ Resume, Interview & Career Readiness Resources
- ✔ Maritime Industry FAQs and Career Information

Student Success Stories

Real Outcomes. Real Opportunities.

Every student's journey is different, but the impact of exposure, experience, and industry connection is clear. From workforce credentials and industry placements to increased confidence and career readiness, these stories offer a glimpse into the real opportunities created through We Work the Waterways programs.



Twic Scholarships Open Doors

Twenty graduating seniors from five Jefferson Parish schools received TWIC cards through a workforce scholarship opportunity, helping remove barriers to maritime employment. Nearly all recipients previously participated in Maritime Interaction Days.

Impact: 20 students received industry credentials that support workforce entry.



Confidence Creates Opportunity

After attending a Maritime Interaction Day in Baton Rouge, Jenea Moses gained the confidence to introduce herself through an elevator pitch she learned at the event. She later returned to help teach the same skill to younger students, turning a learning experience into leadership.

Impact: A full-circle example of students becoming mentors.



Opening Workforce Pathways

Joseph Powell, Director of Port Security at Port Pascagoula, continued sharing We Work the Waterways resources with students and community groups long after the event. Over the past year, he used the WWW Prezi presentation 13 times, helping keep maritime career opportunities visible and accessible throughout the region.

Impact: 7 industry placements along the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

Educator Perspectives

Guiding the Next Generation

4.8



Average Event Rating

#1

Most Valuable Experience
Hands-On Activities with
Industry Professionals

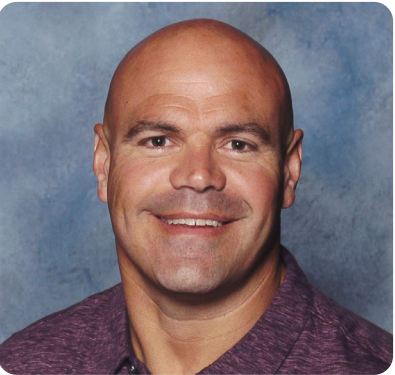
98%

Learned Something New
About Maritime Careers



"For too long, lucrative maritime careers felt out of reach, but We Work the Waterways is changing the tide. They aren't just exposing students to an industry many have never considered. They are building bridges that didn't exist before. Real change requires a catalyst, and We Work the Waterways is the driving force connecting ambitious individuals to extraordinary careers."

Col. Jerry Brandon
Chief of Staff/Director of Innovation
Helix Academy, Baton Rouge, LA



"Every aspect of this day is so beneficial to my students from start to finish. The face-to-face interactions they have with maritime professionals and hearing their stories about how they got started in the industry is incredibly valuable. I also want to thank you and your staff for bringing us this opportunity to learn about the maritime industry and the career opportunities available."

Jeffrey Hufnagel
Teacher
South Park High School, Pittsburgh, PA



"Our students talked the whole way home about the experiences and careers they had no idea about. What a great experience!"

Mrs. Julianna Moore
Career & Social Readiness &
Career Mentorship Teacher
Bentworth HS, Pittsburgh, PA

Supporter Insights

Industry Voices. Shared Impact.

Maritime workforce development is a shared effort. Industry partners help students discover opportunities, explore career pathways, and connect with the people shaping the future of the maritime industry. Meet the supporters making an impact and join the movement.

Meet Our Supporters

We asked our partners what impact they've seen and why they continue to invest in We Work the Waterways. Here's what they had to say:



Opening Doors for Students

"I can only imagine the relief a young person would feel knowing there are even more career pathways available right here in their backyard."

Emily Johnson
Turn Services



Smart Investment in the Industry

"We have had many high school graduates that attended a WWW event come back to us looking for jobs."

Taylor Martin
Associated Terminals



Supporters Behind the Mission

"I've witnessed impact by seeing students who went through the program in high school land jobs after graduation."

Michael Breslin
American Waterways Operators

"Maritime, like many skilled trades, is facing a shortage of future workers. People need to know these critical jobs exist."

Ted Johnson
Western Great Lakes Pilot Association

"I've noticed many students feel they have a clear path to their future once they learn about the maritime industry and the impact it can have on their future."

Nicole Khalaf
E.N. Bisso & Son, Inc.

"We all need to put forth the effort to spread the word about long-term career opportunities in maritime and invest time specifically with young people."

Ronald Zornes
Canal Barge Company

100%

Believe WWW is helping build the future maritime workforce.

98%

Agree WWW reaches students who otherwise would not hear about maritime careers.

45%

Have seen students, educators, or community members directly engage with their organizations because of WWW.

03

Partners in Progress

WE WORK THE WATERWAYS
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“Maritime Throwdown partners with We Work the Waterways because training today’s mariners should also inspire tomorrow’s.”

Capt. Kenny Brown
Founder, Maritime Throwdown

The People Behind the Mission

Driven by Passion. United by Purpose.

We Work the Waterways Team



Errin Howard
Executive Director



Pamela Maxwell
Director of Programs & Operations



Nikki Fondren
Director of Marketing & Outreach



Jolin Luna
Accounting Manager



Vivian Reese
Marketing Fellow

Executive Board of Directors



Seth Lawson
WWW President
Lawson Rigging,
President



Kelly DiMarco
WWW Vice President
Plaquemines Parish
Government, Director of
Economic Development
& Tourism



Capt. Jeanne E. Ferrer
WWW Secretary
Crescent River Pilots,
Open Waters, Pilot



Jenna Gaudet
WWW Treasurer
Eckstein Trade &
Transport, LLC/WIMOs
Association



Dawn Lopez
WWW Director of Board-
Staff Engagement
Associated Terminals/Turn
Services, Vice President of
Marketing & Public Relations

General Board Members

Our Board of Directors provides strategic leadership, governance, and oversight—helping to guide our mission, shape our vision, and ensure long-term sustainability.

- Arthur Yves** Associated Terminals/Turn Services
- Ashley Pitts** Salacia Logistics, LLC
- Brandon Phillips** Riverview Companies
- Christa White** Ingram Barge Company
- David Murray** Waterways Journal
- Heather Ervin** Marine Log
- Katie Dunn** ADM/ARTCo
- Merritt Parsons Vesich** Karl Senner
- Richard Lockwood** Retired
- Stephen Hanemann** Kean Miller

Advisory Council

Our Advisory Council provides program guidance, industry insights, and regional perspectives that inform both outreach and advocacy.

- Alexandra Hernández** Port of South Louisiana
- Brandon Hansen** American Bureau of Shipping
- Capt. Kenny Brown** Maritime Throwdown
- Casey Stubbs** Golding Barge Line
- Colton Schmitt** Riverview Companies (Jr. Advisory Council)
- Frank McCormack** WorkBoat Magazine
- Heather Lech** Cooper Mooring
- Caitlin O'Connor** Celtic Marine
- Jonathan Dunn** American Commercial Barge Line
- Marty Vizier** Hub International Gulf South
- Paul Casebonne** Blessey Marine (Jr. Advisory Council)
- Paul Rohde** Waterways Council, Inc.
- Sidney Blakemore** Canal Barge Company
- Stephen LeBeouf** ADM/ARTCo
- Terence James, Ph.D.** Vicksburg Warren School District
- Thomas Cagle** T&T Marine
- Thomas Cramer** Blessey Marine

Our Partners in Action

Building the Maritime Workforce Together

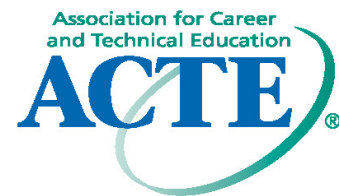
We proudly collaborate with diverse partner organizations who help bring our mission to life. Whether hosting events, leading activities, or speaking on panels, their support strengthens our reach and impact. We never charge partners to participate—because mutual support benefits everyone. By working together, we build a stronger, more unified maritime community.



Our Growing Network

Welcoming New Partners & Collaborators

Over the past year, our network has continued to grow as 14 new organizations joined our mission to expand maritime awareness and strengthen workforce pathways. We are proud to recognize the partners and collaborators who joined We Work the Waterways between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.



54

Partner Organizations

A growing network of industry, education, and community collaborators.

35%

Network Growth

Driven by the addition of 14 new partner organizations this year.

Financial Snapshot

How Financial Support Fueled Our Mission

Thanks to generous donors, sponsors, grant funders, and in-kind supporters, We Work the Waterways invested more than half a million dollars in maritime workforce education and outreach during FY2025–2026.

How Funds Were Raised

		Amount	% of Total
Corporate Sponsorships		\$453,036	76%
In-Kind Contributions		\$86,022	15%
Individual Donations		\$32,310	5%
Grants		\$21,345	4%
Total Revenue		\$592,713	100%

How Funds Were Invested

		Amount	% of Total
Maritime Interaction Days		\$226,997	43%
Community Awareness & Education		\$134,398	26%
Industry Engagement & Outreach		\$84,575	16%
Administration Fees		\$59,513	11%
Professional Fees		\$15,962	3%
Insurance		\$5,539	1%
Total Investment		\$526,984	100%



Projected Funding Needed

\$850,000

Estimated funding needed over the next year to sustain current operations and support planned growth.

Supports:

- ✔ Program Delivery
- ✔ Staffing
- ✔ Educational Resources
- ✔ Outreach
- ✔ Strategic Initiatives

Join the Movement

Five Ways to Get Involved

Ready to get involved?

Whether you can invest, sponsor, equip, volunteer, or amplify, every contribution helps connect more students to meaningful maritime career pathways.

Join the Movement

WeWorktheWaterways.org



Invest

Financial Support

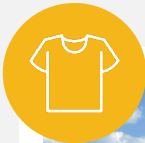
Direct financial contributions help expand programming, deliver hands-on learning experiences, develop resources, and reach more communities across the country.



Sponsor

Programs & Events

Sponsor Maritime Interaction Days, student activities, or regional outreach initiatives. Support creates meaningful opportunities for students and educators to connect with the maritime industry.



Equip

Student Experiences

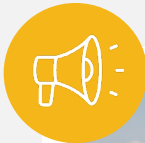
Sponsor t-shirts, bags, lanyards, and giveaway items that create memorable experiences and extend awareness beyond the event.



Volunteer

Industry Engagement

Lead demonstrations, speak on career panels, or guide students through activities that bring maritime careers to life through your knowledge and experience.



Amplify

Social Media Engagement

Follow, share, and engage with We Work the Waterways online to increase awareness, reach new communities, and highlight the importance of maritime careers.



Thank You for Your Support

Together, we're building the maritime workforce of the future.

Visit Our Website

[WeWorktheWaterways.org](https://www.weworkthewaterways.org)

Stay Connected



Contact Us

Call: Errin Howard / 513.403.9312

Email: contact@weworkthewaterways.com

