



Argonne National Laboratory

INVESTING IN EDUCATION AND
TRAINING TO BUILD LOYAL,
LONG-TERM EMPLOYEES

Argonne National Laboratory is one of the U.S. Department of Energy's largest research centers. Managed and operated for the U.S. Department of Energy by the University of Chicago, Argonne conducts nearly 200 research projects per year, ranging from studies of the atomic nucleus to global climate change research. To achieve their goal of becoming a world-renowned lab in advancing science and engineering, management has made a long-term commitment to building a skilled and educated workforce. The lab's workforce is highly diverse at all levels: age, ethnicity, gender and levels of education.

The organization's three-pronged strategy to sustain a skilled workforce is to: 1) offer a generous pre-paid tuition program, 2) deliver a wide array of on-site, customized training opportunities, and most importantly, 3) build the capacity of supervisors to guide the development of staff.

"We are very proud of our education and training programs, some of which have been here for over 12 years. They are the most robust of any national laboratory in the country," says Harold Myron, Division of Educational Programs Director.

Flexible Pre-Paid Tuition

Argonne has long provided its employees with a generous tuition program, spending nearly \$1 million dollars each year on tuition, books and fees. Rather than reimburse employees upon completion of a course, all tuition is pre-paid ahead of time. Pre-paying tuition is a powerful means of encouraging employees to take classes by eliminating the burden on the employee to pay their own tuition and be reimbursed at a later date. As a result, nearly 400 employees accessed tuition funds last year. In addition, the company pays 100% of employee tuition

COMPANY STATS

Name	Argonne National Laboratory
Industry	Scientific Research
Number of Employees	3000 (Illinois); 600 (Idaho & Washington DC)
Location	Argonne, Illinois; Idaho Falls, Idaho
Product/Service	Research Laboratory
Markets	Research to serve the national interest
Revenues	Funded primarily by U.S. Taxpayers
Year Founded	1946
Ownership	U.S. Department of Energy, Operated by The University of Chicago
Web Address	www.anl.gov



costs for certificates, Associates, Bachelors, and Master's degrees, whether or not they are job-related.

The positive partnerships Argonne has with area educational institutions results in many benefits for its employees such as tuition discounts and onsite career fairs, where a host of schools come onsite to promote their programs and register employees.

The laboratory also offers educational options to children of its employees, including four University of Chicago scholarships at full tuition; half tuition for all children of Argonne employees who qualify for admission to the University; and a discount for employees' children who attend the University of Chicago's Lab School in Hyde Park.

Onsite Customized Training

Employees can access a wide range of training at work to help position them for advancement, from technical math, ergonomics, laser safety, computer training, radiological planning, waste management, building maintenance, crane operator and project management. These training opportunities are especially important to Plant Facilities and Services, its largest division,



*"Argonne's primary mission is to perform outstanding science. To do that, we need to ensure that our employees excel. That means we must provide opportunities for employee education and development. Argonne's growth as a laboratory is linked to our employees' growth."
-- Hermann Grunder, Ph.D., Director, Argonne National Laboratory*

where many of its 500 employees (custodians, grounds keepers, mechanics, etc) are less interested in formal degree programs. Many of these individuals began their career at Argonne as laborers and have since progressed to highly skilled technicians.

A source of pride for many Argonne employees is the lab's onsite remediation programs. One is a literacy tutoring program where employees volunteer to help others learn to read and write. This program, ongoing for more than a decade, was developed in response to some employees having difficulty completing essential safety courses because of a lack of literacy skills. Employees who have been a part of this program have been able to rise through the ranks and obtain better jobs. The second is a tutoring program for English as a Second Language, geared toward Argonne's numerous foreign researchers who often struggle with speaking and writing English.

To help employees stay abreast of the organization's wealth of educational options and for management to have more control over employees' career goals, Argonne designed an electronic learning management system that contains individual training profiles. This sophisticated, easily-accessed system tracks all employee training activities, recommends essential courses, allows employees to register online and reminds them of the dates and times of courses.

Success stories of employees working their way through the ranks are prevalent at Argonne, from the custodian who earned his bachelor's degree and MBA through Argonne educational programs, eventually becoming the laboratory's Chief Operating Officer, to the dozens of Argonne scientists who began their research careers as undergraduate research interns.

Management's Role in Developing Employees

While offering learning opportunities for employees is key to sustaining a skilled workforce, its impact would be limited without substantial supervisor support. Therefore, in addition to building the capacity of supervisors, Argonne holds supervisors accountable by linking their compensation to how well they develop their staff.

The newly created onsite supervisor training is viewed as being particularly effective and comprehensive. It includes legal and financial management training, along with topics such as working effectively with unions, how to conduct meaningful performance reviews and career discussions, mentoring, diversity awareness, sexual harassment, and motivation techniques.

Argonne evaluates each manager's contributions to the learning environment by making them part of every performance appraisal, in which managers state their specific activities related to human resources, diversity and employee development. Similarly, as part of their performance appraisals, employees are evaluated on their accomplishments for the previous year and collaborate with their managers on development goals for the year to come.

"We have created an environment of respect, nurturing and mentoring," says Mike Derbridge, Chief Operations Officer. "As a result, employees are promoted and have lengthy careers at the laboratory."

Argonne National Laboratory
9700 S. Cass Avenue
Argonne, IL 60439
Phone: (630)252-2000