BitWISE IMPACT &

The James Irvine Foundation

A Partnership Focused on "What Really Matters"

Proposal Abstract

Established in 2021, Bitwise Impact developed as a natural extension of Bitwise Industries' philanthropic spirit and culture of helping others as a socially impactful enterprise. Now a separate legal entity and standalone 501c3, Bitwise Impact works to complete our mission by partnering with leading practitioners and community-based organizations that are connected to the communities we serve. That being the case, Bitwise Impact regularly works to support the programs of Bitwise Industries. This is a natural and pragmatic choice, as Bitwise Industries is creating the most diverse tech workforce in the nation, a mission that aligns closely to that of Bitwise Impact. Given the genesis of Bitwise Impact's origin, much of our program work is carried out by team members that work at Bitwise Industries and aid Bitwise Impact as a natural extension of their journey of caring and providing for others.

Since 2013, Bitwise Industries (Bitwise), a female and minority-led technology company headquartered in Fresno, CA, has been training undervalued people from overlooked communities for jobs in the digital economy. Their workforce training programs have served over 5,000 individuals, with 80% of former students employed in tech jobs today, resulting in $295 million in aggregate wages for primarily women, Black, Latinx, Indigenous, and other people of color. The average Bitwise student goes from making under $21,000 per year in their employment to over $62,000 per year in first year wages. Bitwise has raised more than $100 million in support of this important work, is a U.S. Department of Labor Nationally Registered Apprenticeship Program, and has built a tech apprenticeship engine that will drive jobs and aid in national economic recovery in 2022 and beyond.

For nearly four years, Bitwise Industries enjoyed a successful relationship with The James Irvine Foundation (Irvine Foundation). During that time, the students they trained were greater than 75% minorities, 40% women, 40% LGBTQ+, and 40% first-generation Americans. Bitwise Industries consistently met or exceeded the expectations of their Agreement with the Irvine Foundation, as they have been explained to us, and it is therefore the hope and aim of Bitwise Impact to continue to build upon that prosperity and history, for the betterment of the people of California, in the Central Valley and beyond.

Key to Bitwise Industries' success is their Apprenticeship model, which unlocks potential by coupling paid, experiential technical training with access and referral to essential services that address non-technical barriers—most typically precipitated by systemic bias and poverty. At Bitwise Impact, we believe that taking a holistic and personalized approach to recruiting talent

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from underserved communities empowers people to change their own lives—igniting and transforming the regional economies of the cities that we work together with Bitwise Industries to serve. In California, those areas include Bitwise's headquarters, in Fresno, as well as their successful operations in Merced, Bakersfield and Oakland.

Both Bitwise Impact and Bitwise Industries' organizations are anchored in amazing partnerships, while our models are anchored in helping people, and in ensuring those with the most barriers to workforce entry find alternative paths to high wage jobs. Bitwise Industries' Apprenticeship model supports those goals, and historically 100% of students completing the program have gone on to receive quality tech industry employment. With the support of the Irvine Foundation, Bitwise Impact proposes a multifarious project that will positively impact each of Bitwise Industries' California programs by funding multiple avenues of student training and support.

Our Goals and Projected Outcomes

Goals

1. To support funding for the workforce programs ("Pre-Apprenticeship" & "Apprenticeship") that Bitwise Impact engages with, in order to increase access to technology education opportunities for low-income women, minorities, formerly incarcerated, veterans, and other marginalized groups in and around their California campuses.
2. To aid in the creation of job-ready applicants in technology who are low-income women, minorities, and underserved groups by funding programs that prepare them technically and personally for work in primarily place-based roles in the technology sector.
3. To help to diversify the technology workforce by increasing the number of low-income women, minorities, and underserved groups in the industry, through financial support aimed at programs that achieve those ends.
4. To aid in the economic recovery and development of the region as it continues through and adapts to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Projected Outcomes

1. To see Bitwise Impact funding used to create cohorts of tech-specific learners that are composed of 95% low-income women, minorities, or other underrepresented/marginalized groups.
2. To see Bitwise Impact funding aid in the continued growth of the tech training programs. The current aim/projection for the year 2022 is 7,300 students trained.
3. To see at least 95% percent of Irvine Foundation/Bitwise Impact funded Apprenticeship program cohort students move on to middle-wage or above positions in the technology industry upon cohort exit.

Targeted Beneficiaries of this Project

 By supporting the programs of Bitwise Industries, Bitwise Impact creates a bridge between people from marginalized communities with stories of systemic poverty to the skills and resources necessary to access opportunities in the tech industry. By upskilling the disadvantaged, Bitwise helps to empower their students to change their own lives—which ignites and transforms the regional economies of the cities in which Bitwise serves. Their programs have helped to create the most diverse tech workforce on the planet, with 60% of students being Black or Latinx, 40% female, non-binary, or gender non-conforming, and 40% LGBTQIA+. Therefore, the targeted beneficiaries of this project are those stuck in the cycle of generational poverty, those marginalized by systemic barriers, those who are systematically undervalued and underserved, and those who have never been given the opportunity to rise.

Relevance

The relevance of a partnership between The Irvine Foundation and Bitwise Impact is made evident by even a casual investigation into the recent investments and stated goals of technology behemoths like Apple, Google, and Amazon. Impressively, all three have invested hundreds of millions of dollars towards the education and realignment of their workforces, with the promise of billions of dollars to follow, as their programs, and in some cases even company universities, establish and results become more concrete. While we salute their efforts towards solving the issues this partnership will continue to alleviate, the practicality of their approach and solutions is lacking. Part of the reason we partner with Bitwise Industries is that their programs and solutions, by contrast, embody pragmatism. By breaking down the non-technical barriers to entry that so many are struggling to overcome, while simultaneously providing practical technology industry training and real-world experience, Bitwise directs their students towards employment and becoming valued technology industry assets. The success of former students who have moved on to the workforce demonstrates agency and behavior that not only mirrors, but outshines that of their peers from more traditional backgrounds, highlighting the relevance of Bitwise's approach and the necessity of continuing this partnership.[1]

In a 2021 "Open Letter" that began with the greeting, "Dear World," the leaders of Bitwise Industries, co-CEOs Irma Olguin Jr. and Jake Soberal, with President Bethany Mily, explained:

> In 2013, we raised our hands and said we had an idea. A way out of the mess we were in.

> We'd figured out that the way to reboot the American economy and make the technology industry diverse and inclusive was to simply do it. Not to make hollow promises. Not to hold Diversity and Inclusion conferences around the world. Not to put black and brown faces in D&I commitment ads. And definitely not by spending more than A BILLION DOLLARS in recruitment efforts only to see a less than one percent difference in the makeup of the technology industry.

[1] Fain, Paul. "Employers As Educators." 2019.
https://www.insidehighered.com/digital-learning/article/2019/07/17/amazon-google-and-other-tech-companies -expand-their

The way to true representation in the tech economy is not rocket science, but it is deliberate and demands a different approach. To us, the way is obvious: connect underestimated people to tech skills and pay them to learn; these people earn tech jobs and help their employers grow; they transform their own lives and the economies of their hometowns; their decent wages buy houses, pay taxes, build playgrounds and rebuild cities.

Too easy, right? Apparently not.[2]

Request & Budget

For the purposes outlined throughout this proposal and highlighted in the Budget section, and to establish a partnership and collaboration between Bitwise Impact and The James Irvine Foundation that will aid in continuing the outstanding progress achieved with Bitwise Industries over the past several years, we earnestly request **$750,000**.

Working together, it is our aim to transcend the notion of "education for all" from a platitude to a reality, wherein the belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to rise is more than a motivator espoused to encourage the undervalued and overlooked, but a truth and promise kept.

PROJECT BUDGET

Bitwise Industries Apprenticeship Programs: Central Valley <u>Total Budget</u>		
$350,000 to support the Apprenticeship Programs in: ● **Fresno, California** ● **Bakersfield, California** ● **Merced, California**	$350,000	
	Total:	$350,000
Bitwise Apprenticeship Programs: Oakland		
$100,000 to support the Apprenticeship Program in: ● **Oakland, California**	$100,000	
	Total:	$450,000

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[2] Olguin Jr., I., Soberal, J., Mily, B. "2021: Dear World." Bitwise Industries. 2021.
https://bitwiseindustries.com/open-letters/2021-dear-world/

Bitwise Pre-Apprenticeship Programs: California <u>Total Budget</u>	

$100,000 to support the Pre-Apprenticeship Programs in:
 	
    ● **Fresno**
    ● **Bakersfield**
    ● **Merced**
    ● **Oakland**
	$100,000
	
	Total:
	$550,000

Laptops & Equipment for Bitwise Industries Students: California	

$150,000 to provide laptops and necessary equipment for Bitwise Industries students in:
 	
    ● **Fresno**
    ● **Bakersfield**
    ● **Merced**
    ● **Oakland**
	$150,000
	
	Total:
	$700,000

Wraparound Services for Bitwise Students: California	

$50,000 to support Wraparound Services in:
 	
    ● **Fresno**
    ● **Bakersfield**
    ● **Merced**
    ● **Oakland**
	$100,000
	
	Total:
	$750,000

TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET: $750,000	

Methodology & Budget Narrative

An Explanation of the Bitwise Industries Workforce Model

The overarching goal at each new Bitwise Industries location is to design and implement successful training programs aimed at helping those for whom poverty has become a way of life. With the aid of the Irvine Foundation, Bitwise Impact will aid Bitwise Industries in providing the necessary resources to break through non-technical barriers and topple the many issues restraining those affected by systemic disadvantage. As part of this project, we would apply $50,000 towards addressing non-technical barriers to entry (e.g., transportation, childcare, mental and emotional health, food insecurity) across all of Bitwise's California campuses. Further, as Bitwise provides extensive technical aid to Apprentices, as well as Pre-Apprentices in need, an additional $150,000 would be used to provide laptops and other necessary equipment to students in Fresno, Bakersfield, Merced, and Oakland. By blurring the lines between learning and doing, and paying students to learn at a rapid pace, apprenticeship is implemented as the primary mode of instruction, and the results speak for themselves. After completion of Bitwise Workforce Training, the vast majority of our students find employment with Bitwise Industries or other tech-related companies.

The Bitwise Industries Workforce Model is composed of three parts:

1. Self-Evaluation
2. Pre-Apprenticeship
3. Apprenticeship

As the name implies, **Self-Evaluation** is a primarily solo undertaking, which includes workshops, bootcamps, and other programs designed to supply students with the information necessary to determine whether they are interested in a career in technology. This is an important step, as the field of technology is not for everyone, and Bitwise would prefer their students learn early on if it is not for them. The Brookings Institute has studied Bitwise and determined that *for every technical job they create, 4.3 other jobs are created within the regional economy*, so Bitwise helps those students who are not technically geared or interested in the field as well, by creating opportunities outside of the tech space. Internally, Bitwise refers to this as the "Halo Effect".

With the aid of The Irvine Foundation, Bitwise Impact would apply $100,000 across Bitwise's California-based locations in Fresno, Bakersfield, Merced, and Oakland. The **Pre-Apprenticeship** step of the Bitwise Workforce Model is composed of project-based learning in technology skill sets for which regional employers, including Bitwise, are hiring. What this opportunity entails is learning specific, useful skill sets within the tech-space that are in demand and having the opportunity to practice those skills prior to entry in the workforce.

By giving students actual experience at employing their skills and proving their

abilities, 80% of those in the Pre-Apprenticeship Program continue on to technical employment.

Finally, the **Apprenticeship** step of the Workforce Model provides apprentices the opportunity to partner with actual senior technology teams to deliver solutions to paying customers. Working in partnership with The Irvine Foundation, Bitwise Impact would disperse $350,000 as needed, based upon the enrollment and requirements of each Bitwise location individually, across the Central Valley, in Fresno, Bakersfield, and Merced. Another $100,000 would be directed specifically to the Apprenticeship Program at Bitwise Oakland, an up-and-coming expansion that is showing remarkable progress and potential.

Much in the way the local blacksmith or cobbler would take an apprentice under their wing and produce a highly skilled laborer in times long passed, the Bitwise Apprenticeship Program identifies those who have exceptional potential and prepares them by providing the opportunity to do and learn from experts in their field while gaining hands-on experience and providing real solutions for real companies. Historically, 100% of apprenticeship graduates have continued on to quality tech employment, highlighting the power of experience gained through professional relationships developed while working locally, and exceeding expectations, with potential employers.

What Really Matters

At Bitwise Impact, we have been inspired by an oft-repeated mantra at Bitwise Industries. It is printed on t-shirts, referenced on their website, radiated across social media, and was center stage during Irma Olguin's recent TED talk: "No one belongs here more than you." More than a clever slogan, these words encapsulate a corporate culture and identity—a way of life for Bitwise's students and employees—promoting equality and empowerment for the underserved. These words are the reason both Bitwise Impact and Bitwise Industries do what we do, the heart of our mission, and at the root of how Bitwise Impact came to be and why supporting alternative pathways is at the core of our mission.

The power of our alliance, and of the alliances we form with partners like The Irvine Foundation, is that they make tangible the Bitwise culture and spreads opportunity for the overlooked in the most powerful industry in the world today—and for the foreseeable future—technology. Together, we will continue to positively impact the underprivileged of California's Central Valley and beyond. Further, we will continue to promote the legitimacy of alternative educational pathways in effective workforce development. It is time that industry leaders embrace the principle:

<div align="center">"No one belongs here more than you."</div>

<div align="center">**We sincerely thank you and look forward to an amazing partnership.**</div>