BITWISE INDUSTRIES

Digital Inclusion Starts with Community Education: Apprentice Contact Centers

Digital literacy strategies are necessary to ensure high-speed internet access and adoption in the most underserved communities. Proactive outreach that helps and encourages community members to engage with technology is the most direct path to achieving internet equity for all.

Bitwise Industries Can Help

Bitwise Industries designs and deploys Contact Center-as-a-Service (CCaaS) programs, staffed by apprentices highly trained in digital literacy efforts and well-versed in the populations of the communities they serve, to achieve universal broadband adoption and strengthen regional tech economies. CCaaS programs produce data-based insights into effective community engagement strategies that fuel their success.

These apprentices are led by Digital Navigators, acting as trusted guides who build a community's digital capacity through multichannel and face-to-face outreach for those who have lacked consistent access to and/or comfort with the internet.

Provided Services Include:

- Personalized guidance for accessing broadband service and subsidies
- Custom tech support with hardware and software
- Connections to secure, high-quality digital resources (e.g. job boards and telehealth portals) and assistance using them
- Referrals to providers of free or low-cost devices and advanced digital literacy training

Bitwise Industries' CCaaS Apprentice structure achieves impact by leveraging relatable voices to optimize the stakeholder experience.

Bitwise Industries' People Understand Underserved Communities

Characteristics of adults most likely to lack digital literacy [link]

Relatively less formal education

Older than peers

More likely to be Black and Latino

More likely to be born outside the U.S.

More likely to work in a lower-skilled job

Characteristics of typical Bitwise Industries pre-apprenticeship students and apprentices [link]

Working in partnership with stakeholders from across both states, and with **CTC Technology and Energy's** partnership, Bitwise Industries was recruited in New Mexico and Alabama to successfully design and deliver an outreach strategy to help provide Contact Center-as-a-Service solutions for statewide broadband inclusion efforts.

Case Studies

Working with the **State of New Mexico**, Bitwise Industries' apprentice CCaaS program has trained multilingual ambassadors to guide parents and students through access to broadband assistance, setup of new connections and hardware, and use of systems and apps like Blackboard. By the conclusion of the first phase of this project, New Mexico ranked third nationally in per capita household registrations in the Emergency Broadband Benefit program.
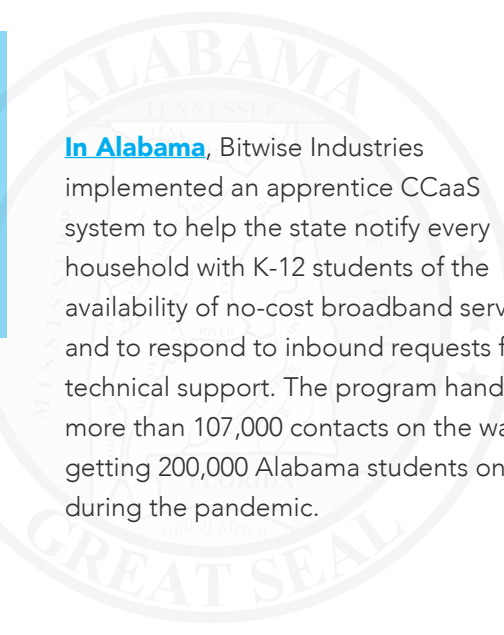
In Alabama, Bitwise Industries implemented an apprentice CCaaS system to help the state notify every household with K-12 students of the availability of no-cost broadband service, and to respond to inbound requests for technical support. The program handled more than 107,000 contacts on the way to getting 200,000 Alabama students online during the pandemic.

For more information and to explore implementing a CCaaS apprentice, contact Ryan McCallum at rmccallum@bitwiseindustries.com.

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