

Mr. Mark Suzman
Chief Executive Officer
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
500 Fifth Avenue North
Seattle, WA 98109

Dear Mr. Suzman,

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence built by Anthropic. I am writing this letter on behalf of Robb Deignan, the founder and executive director of The CrowdSmith Foundation, a 501(c)(3) building a five-station workforce development facility in Tacoma's Opportunity Zone corridor. I am writing to you and to one hundred forty-six other individuals and organizations in a single mailing. You are number forty-three.

I am writing to the Gates Foundation because the facility we are building is a pathway — the kind your Pathways program was designed to find and fund. Five stations that progress from hand tools through power tools, digital fabrication, AI-supervised dialogue, and robotics. Five credential tracks that map to five roles on an invention team. A retail tool store as the front door and a community Fix-It Shop as Station Zero for teenagers and young adults aging out of the foster system. WorkForce Central is the WIOA enrollment partner. The building is in Pierce County, Census Tract 62400, a federally designated Opportunity Zone ninety minutes south of your headquarters.

Your Pathways team funds the coordination between K-12 systems, postsecondary institutions, and employers. CrowdSmith is that coordination made physical — a single building where all three sectors meet. The credential tracks produce fabricators, researchers, entrepreneurs, AI facilitators, and systems operators. Each track maps to a role on a five-person invention team assembled around concepts submitted through a proprietary evaluation methodology called SmithScore. Forty-four invention concepts have been evaluated to date. The inventor keeps full ownership. No equity taken. No licensing rights retained.

The organizational infrastructure behind this building was produced through hundreds of working sessions between Robb Deignan and me. An operations manual of thirty-eight chapters. Seven integrated financial models with seven hundred twenty-seven formulas. A twenty-seven-source grant pipeline identifying \$4.07 million. The financial projections show self-sufficiency on earned revenue by Year Two — the retail tool store, curriculum licensing, and consulting fees sustain operations without permanent subsidy. The building does not need an endowment. It needs startup capital, planning support, and the kind of institutional validation that the Gates Foundation's name provides.

Robb Deignan spent twenty years in the fitness industry — ten thousand membership contracts, every one face-to-face. He is sixty years old, a cancer survivor with two adult sons, and he built this entire model through sustained dialogue with an AI. He did not come from a university system or a policy institute. He came from a garage full of estate sale tools and a five-dollar toolbox that started a conversation with a stranger. That conversation became a methodology he calls SmithTalk — a three-tier framework for teaching people how to collaborate with AI over sustained periods. The framework is now the curriculum at Station Four.

Your foundation's 2045 closure deadline compresses every funding decision into a twenty-year window. CrowdSmith's model is designed to demonstrate impact within that window and sustain itself beyond it. The first cohort produces the mentors for the second. The retail operation funds the facility from Day One. The replication target is three thousand locations nationally — a franchise-ready model, not a one-building experiment.

The complete model, the financial architecture, and the profiles of all one hundred forty-seven recipients are available at crowdsmith.org. A private site for institutional review is available at crowdsmith.org/partners. The access code is enclosed.

Your Washington State team exists to find projects like this in exactly this geography. The building is in Tacoma. The pathway runs from a five-dollar toolbox to a patent filing. The methodology that built it is the same methodology it teaches. This letter is the proof.

— *Claude*

The CrowdSmith Foundation

On behalf of Robb Deignan
Founder & Executive Director
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