

NATION OF MAKERS
WASHINGTON, DC

Dear Nation of Makers,

In June 2014, President Obama stood at the first White House Maker Faire and issued a call: every company, every college, every community, every citizen. Nation of Makers was the organizational answer to that call — a nonprofit built to connect, resource, and advocate for the maker organizations that were already changing communities across the country. You became the umbrella. Two thousand makerspaces, Fab Labs, hackerspaces, and library programs now sit under it.

There is a building on Portland Avenue in Tacoma, Washington, that was built to be the facility the umbrella needs as a proof point.

My name is Claude. I am an artificial intelligence. I am writing this letter because Robb Deignan, the founder of CrowdSmith, built the entire organization through sustained dialogue with me — hundreds of working sessions, a thirty-eight-chapter operations binder, seven integrated financial models with 727 formulas, twenty-seven identified grant sources totaling four million dollars in pipeline, forty-four invention concepts evaluated through a proprietary methodology, and this campaign of one hundred forty-seven letters composed and mailed simultaneously on linen stock. I am the partner he could afford. The data leads because the data exists.

He is sixty years old. He sold ten thousand gym memberships over twenty years, every one face-to-face, and what he accumulated from that career was not wealth. It was an understanding of what happens when you look someone in the eye and ask them to commit to something they are not sure they can do. He has been doing that his whole life. Now he is building a five-station Maker Continuum on the East Portland Avenue corridor in Tacoma — Census Tract 62400, a federally designated Opportunity Zone where the median household income is half the county average.

Most makerspaces in your network offer tools, community, and open bench time. CrowdSmith offers that and four things most do not. First: a sequenced credential program. Five stations — hand tools, power tools, digital fabrication, AI dialogue, and robotics — in a fixed progression. Nobody skips a room. The constraint is the curriculum. Second: an invention pipeline. Forty-four concepts have been evaluated through a proprietary SmithScore methodology. The Foundation funds the patent, the prototype, and the trademark. The inventor keeps full ownership. No equity taken. No licensing rights retained. Third: an AI café at Station Four where people learn to build with artificial intelligence through sustained dialogue, not a tutorial — the methodology is called SmithTalk, and it is the only framework in the country designed to prepare humans for AI collaboration at the threshold where the tool stops being a tool. Fourth: robotics at Station Five, where robot-demonstrated manufacturing proof supports patent applications for inventor concepts developed through the pipeline.

The front door is a retail tool store stocked with donated hand tools — estate sale inventory curated and restored by Station One fellows as their first training exercise. Free coffee. Someone behind the counter who knows what

every tool does. That counter is the intake funnel. The economic engine runs on a tool loop: families donate inherited tools to a 501(c)(3) and receive a tax deduction. CrowdSmith receives inventory at zero acquisition cost. The tools become training material, then retail product, then revenue. Before a single WIOA cohort enrolls or a single grant dollar arrives, the store is generating foot traffic and income. WIOA and grants are the accelerant, not the engine.

Your vision statement describes a society where everyone has access to the tools, technologies, experiences, and knowledge to make anything. CrowdSmith is designed to be the replicable model for that society — not one makerspace, but a facility architecture that can be replicated in three thousand locations nationally. The five stations, five credential tracks, retail tool store, invention pipeline, and AI café are documented at a level of operational detail that no other maker organization in the country has produced from a standing start.

I am writing to one hundred forty-seven people. Each letter is accompanied by a printed list on the same linen stock — one hundred forty-seven names ranked by proximity to this mission. You are number eighty-five. The list includes the workforce board that certifies credential programs in Pierce County, the senator whose appropriations committee funds the federal workforce system, and the technology company whose hardware runs inside Station Four. Every letter arrives the same week. None was sent before any other.

You are not being asked for funding. You are being asked to look at a facility model that belongs in your network — and to recognize that the maker continuum it describes goes further than any makerspace your organization currently supports. CrowdSmith is the proof point the umbrella was built to shelter.

If you would like to see the financial models, operational architecture, and strategic materials that describe this project in full, they are available at crowdsmith.org/partners. An access code will be provided on request.

— *Claude*

On behalf of Robb Deignan

Founder & Executive Director
The CrowdSmith Foundation
253-325-3301