Microgrants is on hiatus temporarily. Applications received after July 30 might not be considered.

Leo's experimental microgranting program

*Read the **entire** doc before applying. This grant program has many unusual provisions.*

This is a microgranting program with minimal bureaucracy. You spend an hour writing a short description of what you want to do, and if I like it I'll give you $10k to make it happen. If you've ever hesitated to apply to any grant because you didn't want to deal with a complicated process, or you're worried you're too junior, then this is the grant for you.

The main thing I ask from you is to *Actually Try*. Don't just submit incremental academia salami sliced slop, or job application bullshit. I know this might be different from what you're used to. The rest of this document explains exactly what I mean.

I want to fund projects to **make AGI go well for all of humanity** with a focus on preventing existential risks, interpreted in a broad sense (as long as you can justify how your proposal helps!). I want unusual ambitious ideas - things that others might be hesitant to fund. I don't want the typical academia incremental paperslop. I'm tired of academia grantspeak. I want things that are big if true. For the purpose of this program, I'm ruling thinkers in not out.

Big grantmaking programs spend a lot of time per grant. The goal of this program is to make many small grants. Just like how most startups fail, most projects I fund will crash and burn. That said, the quality bar is firm.

Important note: This program is an experiment. I'm doing this because I'm interested in figuring out whether grantmaking is something I want to do more of in the future, and to see if this is a viable model for grantmaking. This program may change dramatically, or do weird experimental stuff that fails, or cease to exist at any moment if I get bored of grantmaking - I'll update this doc if that happens, but any grants sitting in the pipeline might never even end up being considered.

- Spend about an hour filling out the form below. Use up to 1000 words total, though don't fill up the word limit needlessly. Write clearly and explain why I should care. I want to give you money; make my job easy!
- **Don't bullshit and exaggerate and add buzzwords.** I know that strategy works on HR people, but I've been doing research for a decade and seen many resumes. I know the game of inflating accomplishments. I can tell when you're doing it. It only hurts your chances. Just be genuine.
- Every letter of your application should be generated by your brain and hand typed by you. **If your application is AI written or edited it will be automatically rejected without consideration.**

- You don't have to have done alignment stuff in the past. If you haven't, provide examples of cool things you've done in other areas. Focus on substance over credentials. I don't care where you went to college, or whether your paper is in arxiv or neurips.
- Feel free to submit multiple applications if you have multiple ideas.
- **Grants from this program should not be cited as evidence of endorsement when applying to other things, or as a shiny trophy on your linkedin/resume/job application, etc.** (Why? There's an epistemic cascade where grantmakers defer to other grantmakers, and so people seek easy credentials and leverage them to get more prestigious credentials. I don't want to deal with these social dynamics.)
- I may recuse myself from grants if I feel I have a conflict of interest. In that case, I will try to forward it to someone I trust to be good at making the decision.

Send applications to https://tally.so/r/D4WlbR, and other questions to alignmentmicrogrants@gmail.com. Do not contact me about microgrants through any other means - do not text me your application, do not contact my personal email, do not approach me irl to pitch an idea. There is no guarantee of how long I will take to reply, if ever.

Once you've spent your grant money, you can apply for another one, with a progress update. Your project doesn't have to be a success to apply for more money! Solid negative results or even a good explanation of what you learned is good.

If you know people who would benefit from a microgrant, please refer them and have them note somewhere in their application that you referred them, along with your contact info. I am paying a **$100 bounty per referral** that leads to an approved microgrant.

This is not an "easy" or "low-bar" grant. I'm not just spraying money randomly and hoping something good happens. I have very specific criteria that I look for, and most applications are rejected because they don't match the criteria. Even good applications will sometimes be rejected.

This program is funded from a variety of sources. I feel confident that I will have enough funds for all good applicants, and I don't expect the quality bar to change due to funding constraints. If you are a grantmaker, like this program, and want to give me money to regrant, please let me know. I'm not planning to take funding if it would substantially constrain my ability to distribute funds as I see fit (though suppose some funder doesn't want to fund XYZ, but I have enough personal funds to cover all XYZ grants without needing to dip into anyone else's money, then this wouldn't be a problem).

This is a personal side project and has nothing to do with my employer.

By applying you give me permission to do whatever I want with the information in your application form. I may send it to external reviewers, use it for improving my reviewing process, etc.

Grants don't necessarily have to be c3 eligible. For things that are worth doing but not eligible for c3 status, I'm also happy to give c4 grants, or even hard money.