

Leo's experimental microgranting program

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 is hard, and 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**. If you have a cool idea that only helps indirectly, you should lean towards submitting it anyways. I don't care whether it has AI vibes, I only care whether it actually makes the future go well. 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 still firm. I'm only giving money to projects that could succeed big, rather than just spraying money at everyone.

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.
- 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 in person 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 are a grantmaker, like this program, and want to give me money to regrant, please let me know. By default I will be giving my own money but I will be able to give more grants if I have more money.

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.

A fictional example of how your application should NOT be. If your resume and application have this vibe, your application will be rejected. Don't exaggerate your accomplishments! Just be straightforward.

K. Ringe

Senior AI Research Scientist

123 Your Street
Your City, ST 12345
(123) 456-7890
no_reply@example.com

EXPERIENCE

AI Safety Research Organization — Chief Approval Officer

MONTH 20XX - PRESENT

Approved hundreds of Google doc suggested changes. 99.9% approval rating. Was responsible for ensuring that safe changes to AI were made, among others. Used \$90k in Claude tokens in one day.

Google Plus Research, Mountain View — Senior Assistant to the Research Fellow

MONTH 20XX - MONTH 20XX

Led social network synergy research using deep graph neural networks for social media platform with billions of users worldwide. Built and evaluated multiple least squares order 1 polynomial models.

EDUCATION

Harvard Extension — Bachelors and Masters concurrently

MONTH 20XX - MONTH 20XX

GPA 4.0. Dean's list. President of the fish club, which organized fish for 270+ students. Mentored by the great Turing award winner Geoffrey Hinton's father's brother's nephew's cousin's former roommate.

YC Startup School

MONTH 20XX - MONTH 20XX

Immersed in the elite entrepreneurial environment of Silicon Valley. Worked on scaling paradigm shifting opportunities.

PAPERS

Mathematically Eliminating Deception in Language Models using Interpretability

At 16 years old, I was acknowledged on a paper that received a Spotlight at the Interpretability Workshop at NeurIPS 2025, the most prestigious conference in AI. We utilized novel pioneering steering vector methods to generate text 100x less likely to contain the word "deception" than baseline.

SKILLS

Python
Pytorch
Pandas
Numpy
Langchain
Blockchain
Thought leadership
Scrum certification
Keras
MCP
Prompt engineering
Multi agent architectures
Claude

AWARDS

Forbes 30 under 30
Springfield Regional Science Olympics Participant
Codeforces score 997
MENSA Certified
USACO Bronze

This is a personal side project and has nothing to do with my employer. I also would not take funding from anyone who substantially constrains 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).

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.