

AI Prompt Library • Program & Grantmaking

Practical GenAI prompts for foundation program and grantmaking staff • Aurorae Group, LLC

This reference provides ready-to-use GenAI prompts mapped to foundation program and grantmaking functions. Each prompt is a starting point — customize the bracketed fields for your context and refine the output before use. Grantmaking requires deep contextual judgment that AI cannot replace: use these prompts to accelerate analysis and drafting, not to substitute for staff expertise or grantee relationships. These prompts are designed for use with current generative AI tools including ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini.

Grantmaking & Due Diligence

1	Use Case	Synthesize a grant application or letter of inquiry into a structured summary for program staff or committee review.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced program officer. I am going to provide a grant application or letter of inquiry from [applicant organization]. Please produce a structured summary for internal review that includes: applicant overview (organization, mission, geographic focus, budget size), the proposed project and its theory of change, alignment with our funding priorities, the strength of the evidence base or track record, key questions or gaps in the application that warrant follow-up, and a preliminary assessment of fit. Keep it to 1 page. Tone: analytical and objective. [Paste application here]</i>
	Value	Reduces the time required to process high-volume grant applications while ensuring consistent evaluation criteria are applied across all submissions.
2	Use Case	Draft due diligence questions for a site visit, grantee interview, or deeper organizational review.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced foundation program officer. I need to prepare for a [site visit / grantee interview / due diligence call] with [organization name], which is applying for [describe grant type or amount]. Based on the following application summary: [provide brief summary]. Please generate 12-15 due diligence questions organized into categories: organizational capacity and leadership, financial health and sustainability, program quality and evidence of impact, equity and community engagement, and learning and accountability practices. Prioritize questions that will surface information not already in the application.</i>
	Value	Produces a comprehensive, organized inquiry framework that ensures due diligence covers all critical dimensions without relying on the same standard questions every cycle.
3	Use Case	Draft a grant decision letter — either an approval with conditions or a decline — that is clear, respectful, and mission-grounded.

	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced foundation communications professional. I need to draft a [grant approval / grant decline] letter to [Organization Name] regarding their proposal for [project name]. [If approval]: The grant amount is [amount] for [period]. Key conditions or reporting requirements: [list]. [If decline]: The primary reasons for the decision are [list 2-3 reasons]. We want to [acknowledge their work / encourage reapplication / suggest alternative resources]. Tone: respectful, clear, and mission-grounded. Avoid vague language like 'not a fit at this time' without explanation. Keep it to 2-3 paragraphs.</i>
	Value	Produces decision letters that maintain grantee relationships and foundation reputation. Clear, specific decline letters — rare in the sector — are consistently appreciated by applicants and strengthen a foundation's standing in the field.

Program Design & Learning

4	Use Case	Develop a theory of change for a program or funding initiative that links activities to outcomes to impact.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced program design specialist with expertise in theories of change. Please help develop a theory of change for [describe the program or initiative]. The problem being addressed is: [describe]. The target population is: [describe]. The core program activities are: [list]. Please produce: a clear problem statement, the key assumptions the theory rests on, a logical chain from activities to outputs to short-term outcomes to long-term impact, and 2-3 indicators that would provide early evidence that the theory is working. Format as a narrative description followed by a visual logic model structure.</i>
	Value	Surfaces the causal assumptions embedded in program design that are often implicit. Making the theory of change explicit enables more rigorous evaluation and more honest conversations about what the program can and cannot accomplish.

5	Use Case	Synthesize learnings from grantee reports, evaluations, or field research into a coherent set of insights for program strategy.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced program learning specialist. I am going to provide [describe sources: grantee reports / evaluation findings / field research]. Please synthesize this material into a learning brief that: identifies the 4-5 most significant patterns or themes across the body of evidence, notes where evidence is strong versus where it is limited or mixed, surfaces tensions or unexpected findings that warrant further exploration, draws implications for our program strategy or grantmaking approach, and identifies the most important questions that remain unanswered. Write for a program team audience that is familiar with the work but has not read all the source material. [Paste source material here]</i>

	Value	Transforms scattered grantee reporting into strategic intelligence. Foundations that systematically synthesize learning across their portfolios make better grantmaking decisions and contribute more meaningfully to the field.
6	Use Case	Design an evaluation framework or learning agenda for a funding initiative or portfolio.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced foundation evaluation specialist. I need to develop an evaluation framework for [describe the initiative or portfolio]. The initiative aims to [describe goals]. The key stakeholders are [list]. Please design a framework that includes: the primary evaluation questions the initiative should be able to answer after [timeframe], the types of evidence that would address each question, the data collection methods and their feasibility, how learning will be shared with grantees and the broader field, and the resource implications (staff time, external evaluator needs). Flag any questions that are currently unanswerable given available data.</i>
	Value	Ensures that evaluation is designed into an initiative from the beginning rather than added as an afterthought. Evaluation frameworks that include field-sharing expectations signal accountability and generate knowledge that benefits the broader sector.

Grantee & Field Engagement

7	Use Case	Draft a convening agenda or facilitation guide for a grantee learning community, peer exchange, or field event.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced facilitator with expertise in nonprofit and philanthropic convenings. I need to design a [half-day / full-day / multi-day] convening for [number] grantees or field partners focused on [topic or theme]. The goals are: [list 2-3]. Participants include: [describe range of organizations and roles]. Please produce: a full agenda with time allocations, the facilitation approach for each session (plenary, small group, peer exchange, etc.), specific discussion questions or activities for key sessions, and a closing that generates concrete commitments or next steps. Note any logistics considerations for the design.</i>
	Value	Produces a coherent, purposeful convening design rather than a schedule of presentations. Well-designed grantee convenings generate peer learning and relationship value that extends well beyond the event itself.
8	Use Case	Draft a field scan or landscape analysis summary on a topic relevant to the foundation's mission or a funding initiative.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced policy and field researcher. I need a structured field scan on [topic] as it relates to [foundation mission area or geography]. Please produce a summary that covers: the current state of</i>

		<i>the field (key actors, recent developments, emerging trends), the major debates or tensions in the field, gaps in the current ecosystem that philanthropy could address, examples of promising models or approaches from within or adjacent fields, and the most important questions a funder entering or deepening in this space should be asking. Cite types of sources you are drawing on so staff can verify. [Provide any source material or context here]</i>
	Value	Gives program staff and leadership a structured foundation for strategy conversations without requiring weeks of background reading. Field scans are most valuable when they surface gaps and questions, not just confirm existing assumptions.

9	Use Case	Write a program update, field report, or impact brief for a board, leadership, or public audience.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced foundation communications professional. I need to write a [board report section / field update / impact brief] on [program area or initiative] for [audience]. Key developments to report: [list]. Impact data or stories to include: [provide]. Challenges or lessons learned: [describe]. Tone: [honest and strategic / inspiring and accessible / evidence-grounded]. Please draft a 3-5 paragraph narrative that: sets context for the work, highlights the most significant developments and their meaning, names challenges honestly without being defensive, and points toward next steps or strategic questions on the horizon. Avoid laundry lists of activities — prioritize meaning over comprehensiveness.</i>
	Value	Produces program narratives that inform and engage rather than simply report. Audiences — especially boards — are better served by honest strategic framing than by exhaustive activity logs.

10	Use Case	Draft applicant-facing materials that help prospective grantees understand your priorities, process, and what makes a strong proposal.
	Sample Prompt	<i>You are an experienced foundation communications professional. I need to write [applicant guidelines / an FAQ for prospective grantees / a guidance document on what makes a strong proposal] for [Foundation Name]'s [program area or grant type]. Our priorities are: [list 2-3]. We fund organizations that [describe eligibility]. We do not fund [list key exclusions]. What distinguishes a strong proposal in our view: [describe]. Common mistakes applicants make: [list]. Please draft clear, accessible language that: sets honest expectations, helps applicants self-select appropriately, and signals what we genuinely value in a partner. Avoid boilerplate language that sounds like every other funder.</i>
	Value	Reduces misaligned applications and the staff time spent declining them. Transparent, specific applicant guidance is one of the highest-leverage investments a foundation can make in grantee relations and field trust.

Important: Do not input confidential grantee information, applicant financial data, or sensitive organizational details into free or unapproved AI tools. AI-generated grant summaries and due diligence questions should be

reviewed by program staff before use. Grantee relationships depend on human judgment, trust, and contextual knowledge that AI cannot replicate.

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