

What to Know About Credit Cards Offering Electric Vehicle Rewards

Lots of credit cards offer points on gas and now some offer points on electric vehicle charging too

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EV owners now have several cards to choose from.

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You may have been getting credit-card rewards for years every time you fill up your car's gas tank, depending upon what type of card you have. Yet owners of electric vehicles haven't had that same perk—until now.

Prior to this year, you would have been hard pressed to find many credit cards offering EV rewards, though that finally has started to change. U.S. Bank began offering EV rewards in January on its business and consumer credit cards. Several months later, Sam's Club joined the EV rewards bandwagon.

All this means EV owners now have several options, although there are still some caveats. One is that these cards typically reward you for charging at a public charging station, and usually not for charging your car at home where costs are lumped in with your home's electricity bill. Another is tied to one of the prime benefits of

owning an EV: It costs a lot less to fill your vehicle's "tank" than a traditional car's. That translates into less opportunity to earn rewards than for, say, a gas card. Still, for the right electric vehicle driver, the rewards may make owning an EV even more attractive.

If you're thinking of getting a credit card that offers EV rewards, here's your road map.

Credit cards that reward EV spending

So far, possibly because EV rewards remain a niche offering, the credit card rewards for plugging in a vehicle look very similar to what you would receive for filling up your car at a gas station.

For instance, if you have a Sam's Club® Mastercard®, you can earn 5% cash back at an eligible EV charging station. After spending \$6,000 per year, which would be unlikely, you'd then receive 1% cash back.

And U.S. Bank offers several ways to earn EV rewards: The U.S. Bank Altitude Go Visa Signature Card offers two points for every dollar spent at an EV charging station, just like it does for cardholders spending money at a gas station. The U.S. Bank Cash+ Visa Signature Card has categories that change every quarter, but one of the rewards you can get is the option to earn 2% cash back when you plug in your car at an EV station, which is also what you'll get if you fill up your tank.

Cardholders of the U.S. Bank Altitude Connect Visa Signature Card will receive four points for every dollar spent at a charging station—or at a gas station. There is a \$95 annual fee to consider, though it's waived during the first year.

And don't confuse the EV rewards credit cards with charge-card offers. The PointCard™ Titan is an actual charge card—that is, you have to pay off your balance in full every month—and it comes with a \$399 annual fee. But it gives cardholders five points for every dollar spent at an EV charging station. The FutureCard Visa Card is also a charge card. It gives cardholders 5% cash back on EV charging as well as other eco-friendly purchases such as public transit and bike shops.

Worth remembering: Even if you don't have a credit card that offers specific EV rewards, you still may get some cash back, points or miles when you charge an electric vehicle. Many cards offer 1% cash back, for instance, on all purchases and then have various tiers for other shopping categories. So you would likely at least get the minimum amount of rewards for charging an EV if you're using a credit card that isn't marketing itself to electric vehicle owners.

Are EV rewards cards worth it?

Ultimately whether it's worth getting a credit card with EV rewards depends on your credit card habits and how much you drive. If you have an electric vehicle, you've spent a lot on your car—according to Kelley Blue Book [it costs a little over \\$65,000 on average to purchase an electric vehicle](#)—but you won't be spending much at the pump.

In fact, the Zero Emission Transportation Association, a federal coalition focused on advocating for 100% EV sales by 2030, recently found that nationally EVs are [three- to five-times cheaper to drive](#) per mile than gas-

powered vehicles. In some states, EVs are five- to six-times cheaper to drive.

The Kelley Blue Book suggests motorists will typically spend \$55 a month charging their electric cars. Here's the math on that: It would be \$660 a year to charge your car—and \$33 in cash back based on a 5% rewards rate.

That's likely enough to earn you a couple of free trips to the charging station. But unless you are someone who carries multiple credit cards, and is willing to sign up for a card you use just to charge your electric vehicle, you are probably better off with a card that offers a top rewards rate on a different spending category, like groceries or travel.

For instance, the average American household spends nearly \$5,000 a year on groceries. The Capital One SavorOne Rewards Card offers 3% back on most supermarket spending, amounting to a potential \$150 a year in rewards—a far better deal if you are someone who just wants to carry a single card.

“If you want the truth, unless they up their benefits, I don't really see a card specific to EV charging rewards being all that popular,” says Karen McGrath, an assistant professor of finance at Bucknell University in Lewisburg, Pa.

When EV rewards cards are a good deal

Still, if you drive a lot—and frequently charge your car away from home—you could eventually rack up the kind of charging costs that make a specialty card worth your while.

So-called fast chargers at public charging stations, designed to charge a car battery in about 20 minutes, can be far more expensive than plugging in at home. A charge from one of these typically costs two- to three-times what you pay in your own garage, according to Gil Tal, director of the Plug-in Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Research Center at the University of California, Davis. “If you're an Uber or Lyft driver with an EV, I would get one of those credit cards immediately,” Tal says.

And even if you are a homebody, who mostly charges overnight and rarely has the chance to earn rewards at public charging stations, you may still be able to get some benefit from a credit card that offers EV rewards. Every calendar year, after paying six months of electric bills with a My GM Rewards Card™, you'll earn a \$100 credit card statement—provided you're charging a registered electric GM vehicle.

EV rewards credit cards may become more generous

The future of EV rewards could be bright, suggests Dionne Nickerson, assistant professor of marketing at the Indiana University Kelley School of Business. One of Nickerson's specialties is researching corporate social responsibility.

Nickerson agrees that EV rewards won't be a huge cash reward incentive for some consumers. Plus, there's the psychology to wrestle with. After all, if you're spending a small fortune on gas, you're at least getting what feels like a small fortune in cash back, miles or points. If you're spending less to charge your car, what you get back will be less too. Still, Nickerson says that regardless, it is another rewards opportunity, which consumers may appreciate, especially environmentally friendly ones.

“In the next five to 10 years, you’ll probably see a lot more credit cards doing this, for the simple fact that they realize that this is important to Generation Z,” Nickerson says