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8 Steps to Qualify for a Free or Low-Cost Leased or Used Electric Vehicle

By stacking three incentives and current record-low lease pricing, some low- to moderate-income drivers may be able to lease a new electric vehicle (EV) for free – or purchase a used EV for free or very low cost. Higher income drivers can use these programs to get amazing deals on new or used EVs – as low as \$100/month for the most affordable leases, after incentives. There are now over [40 electric vehicles and plug-in hybrids](#) on the market in California in all shapes and sizes – from small affordable sedans to larger cars, crossovers, SUVs, and minivans.

Follow these eight steps to see if you qualify for a free or low-cost leased or used EV:

1. Do you qualify for the [Clean Vehicle Assistance Program](#)?

Low- or moderate-income drivers (e.g. a family of four that makes less than \$104,800) are eligible for this program, which offers a \$5,000 grant to purchase or lease a new or used EV and \$2,000 toward a charging station or \$1,000 in credits for public charging stations. This rebate is applied at the dealer to help income-qualified Californians purchase or lease a used or new EV, plug-in hybrid, or hybrid vehicle. The program takes three weeks to three months to qualify for, so start today to review program guidelines and see how it might work for you.

2. Do you qualify for the [California Clean Vehicle Rebate Program](#)?

Those looking for a new EV may be eligible for a \$2,000 rebate through this program. Low- or moderate-income drivers (e.g. a family of four that makes less than \$104,800) get an enhanced \$4,500 rebate. Most people with an income under \$150,000/single filer or \$300,000/joint filer will qualify for a standard rebate of \$2,000. This is a rebate you apply for after buying or leasing a new EV. It can take up to 90 days to receive.

3. All California residents are eligible to receive the [California Clean Fuel Reward](#)!

The California Clean Fuel Reward is available to anyone who buys or leases a new electric vehicle with a battery capacity greater than 5 kWh. The customer must register the vehicle in California and must reside in California. This **instant** electric vehicle reward of up to \$1,500 is offered at the dealership, on a sliding scale, depending on battery size.

4. Drivers that qualify for all three incentives above (a total of \$11,000 in savings) could lease some of the most affordable pure EVs for free, as many leases cost less than \$11,000 for three years.

Leasing is traditionally not an affordable way to drive a new car, but with high incentives and low-cost leasing options for EVs, even drivers that only qualify for standard rebates of \$3,500

may be able to use this \$3,500 in incentives as a down payment, resulting in a monthly lease payment of \$100-\$150. With home EV charging about 1/3-1/2 the price of gas, many drivers could also save significantly on their gasoline bill.

Leasing a car can come with unexpected payments at the end of three years if the vehicle has mileage overages or is turned in with damages or more than normal wear and tear. Read more from Consumer Reports about the [pros and cons of leasing](#) and review their [hybrid and EV buying guide](#).

5. The Clean Vehicle Assistance Program grant can be applied toward used EVs, which can be purchased starting at \$5,000-\$10,000.

The lowest priced used EVs may have ranges under 100 miles and be a good choice for households with more than one vehicle. Plug-in hybrids or used EVs with 200+ mile ranges can start at \$10,000-\$15,000 and may be a better choice for one-car households or drivers with long commutes (that would have to pay extra for a high-mileage lease).

6. Do you have access to charging at home, at work, or in your neighborhood?

The [Clean Vehicle Assistance Program](#) pays for up to \$2,000 toward installing a charging station OR gives \$1,000 in credits to use at public charging stations.

Many EV drivers charge up overnight with a normal 110 volt outlet. A suitable outlet is often already available in the garage or driveway, and is a great, low-cost solution for those who drive less than 50 miles per day. Another option is to add a 240 volt outlet, which allows for a full 300+ mile charge overnight. Depending on the home, installing the outlet can cost as little as \$500-\$1,000.

7. [Learn more from our recent EV 101 Webinar.](#)

Watch the recording to learn about the [40+ models of EVs](#), the difference between a pure EV and a plug-in hybrid, used versus new EVs, incentives, charging, and more.

8. [Sign up to stay informed.](#)

[Sign up](#) to receive free purchase guidance or to be notified for our upcoming webinars, “How to Buy a Used EV” and “How to Get an EV for Free,” which will cover these topics in greater detail. You can also receive notices about upcoming Electric Drive 805 events, webinars, and workshops. Join the movement to bring all-electric transportation solutions to the 805 region.