



Aeroplan Has Given Over 1.3 Billion Points to Charities. Should You Donate Your Points, Too?

Description

Aeroplan's new rewards program launched at the end of 2019. It was certainly the talk of the town: with no more carrier surcharges (those pesky "fuel surcharges"), simplified redemption methods, and new 5,000 point stopover policies, the Aeroplan program looked stronger than ever. With the demand for air travel still high at the end of 2019, it seemed nothing could go wrong.

Until the pandemic.

Now, two years on, many Aeroplan frequent flyers have yet to use their Aeroplan points. While Aeroplan has pushed back the expiration of inactive points to September 2022, you might be restless to use your points on *something*.

Though Aeroplan gives you plenty of redemption options (gift cards, merchandise, rental cars), there's one option many Canadians overlook: the Aeroplan Member Donation Program.

What is the Aeroplan Member Donation Program?

The Aeroplan Member Donation Program connects Canadian initiatives and charitable organizations with generous Aeroplan members. The program is fairly large. In fact, since its inception in 2006, it has already raised 1,390 billion points for over 1,400 donations.

To be clear, these organizations typically don't have any connection with Aeroplan. They are autonomous, and they're simply partnering with Aeroplan to connect with its members. Much like crowdfunding, they can start a campaign with a points goal (say one million points), along with a description of why they're asking for donations and what they'll do with your points.

When an organization receives 75% of its goals, Aeroplan will donate 10% more to help them achieve it. Occasionally, Aeroplan will also match points donated by its members.

Once an organization hits its goal, it can then redeem Aeroplan points for plane tickets, car rentals,

hotels, merchandise (such as gift cards and laptops), or even prizes for fundraising events.

How can you donate Aeroplan points?

Aeroplan has over 300 charities you can donate your miles. To donate them, log in to your Aeroplan account and navigate to the “donation” option under redemptions. You can also go to the [“charities” page](#), select the charity you want to help, then sign in to donate your points.

What value do you get for donating your points?

This is a tricky question, as it depends on how the charity redeems the points. In general, Aeroplan members (charity or not) will get the most value when they redeem their points for flights, while getting the least value for gift cards and merchandise. That said, it can be difficult ascertaining the value of your donations, especially if the charity plans to redeem them in multiple ways.

Should you donate your points?

For Aeroplan members who are feeling generous, donating your points can make a huge difference. Even if you don't get the full value for your points (for example, the charity uses them to buy merchandise), the act of giving far surpasses any valuation metrics.

That said, you don't have to donate your points to contribute to charities. In fact, you could earn Aeroplan points *and* donate at the same time. Most charities will accept credit cards as an applicable form of payment. If you make a donation to a charity, you could earn Aeroplan miles and contribute to a worthy cause at the same time.

Don't overlook donations. Oftentimes, we get so tunnel-visioned in our earnings, it's easy to get greedy. If you're accumulated a massive amount of points, consider giving some to others.

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