

Spotlight region:

USA

The Statue of Liberty is depicted in a teal color, holding a torch with a golden flame. The statue is positioned in front of a large, white, stylized 'USA' text. The background is a blurred American flag with red and white stripes and blue stars.

America's

shifting soft and
hard power

Wealthy Americans
are looking to the
Caribbean as their

Plan B

What Trump's Gold
Card tells us about the
value of citizenship

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A stylized, low-poly illustration of a city skyline at sunset. The sky is a gradient of orange, yellow, and pink, with a large, bright sun or moon in the center. The city buildings are rendered in various shades of pink, purple, and orange, creating a silhouette effect against the bright sky. The overall mood is warm and dramatic.

Foreword from the CEO

It seems like now more than ever, America can't stay out of the news. Whether it's the FIFA World Cup, tariffs, the war in Iran, or a major business development, the US and its leader, Donald Trump, continue to dominate the headlines.

But there has also been a shift in how the US is seen by contemporaries and the world's wealthy. Perhaps the most revealing finding in this year's World Citizenship Report is not where the United States ranks, but who is most closely reading the rankings.

The US comes second only to China on Economic Opportunity in an Index that measures 188 jurisdictions across five motivators. Yet it is wealthy American families who are now diversifying their citizenship faster than almost anyone else, driving record demand for the established Caribbean Citizenship Programmes and accounting for a growing share of applications worldwide.

This shows that a country need not be failing for its citizens to want optionality. It only has to be uncertain.

Our data from the WCR shows that where families once explored a second citizenship in reaction to a single political moment, they now approach it as considered, long-term planning.

71.6% of respondents say they are more likely to consider an additional citizenship in response to global events, against just 2.7% who are less inclined to apply for a second citizenship, and only around a third are very confident their existing citizenship will deliver the same security and opportunity over the coming decade.

These are planners, not evacuees, and the decisions are driven by business and professional opportunity, investment diversification and long-term family security.

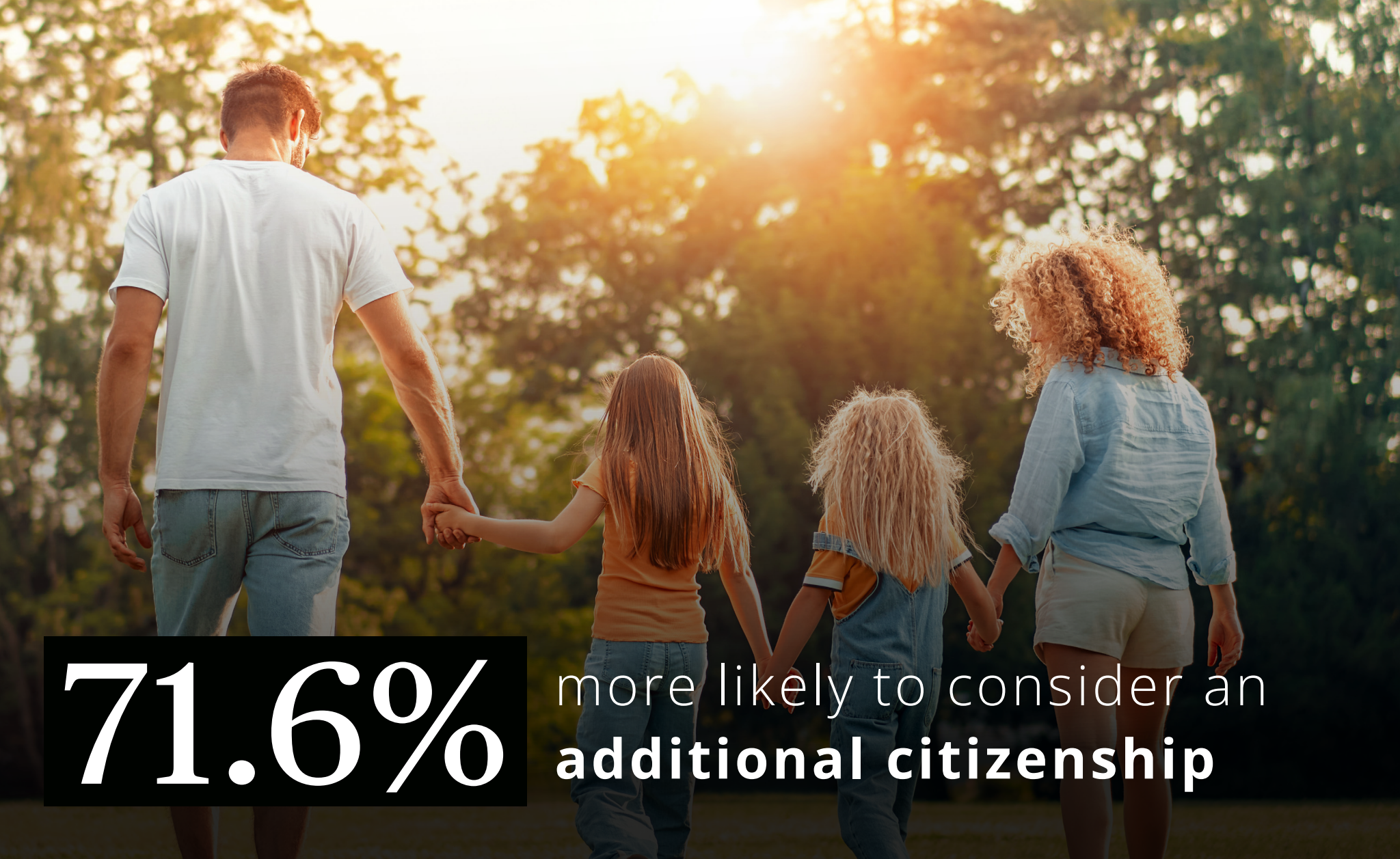
This mini-report brings the Americas findings of the World Citizenship Report 2026 into a single view. It examines how American power reads on a citizenship scoreboard, why the Caribbean has become the destination of choice for the American Plan B, and what the Gold Card reveals about the difference between pricing citizenship and creating its value.

I hope it proves useful to the families, researchers, advisers, and governments planning for the decade ahead rather than the headline of the week.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Micha-Rose Emmett". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each name being capitalized and prominent.

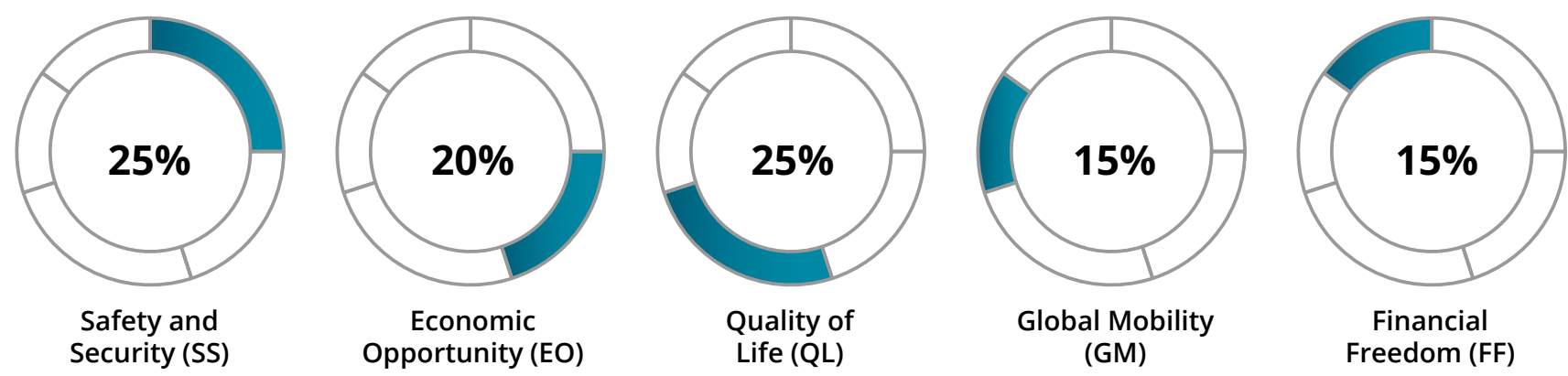
CEO, CS Global Partners



71.6% more likely to consider an **additional citizenship**

Key data points

The World Citizenship Index assesses 188 jurisdictions across five motivators:



Scores draw on official data from institutions including the World Bank Group and the United Nations, combined with a survey of 546 high net worth individuals.

Some of the key findings which shape the WCR and this mini-report include:

China leads Economic Opportunity at 89.3. The United States follows at 81.3, with Ireland third at 80.3.

Ireland tops the Index overall at 85.1.

The United States leads none of the five motivators, although it ranks highly in most of them.

Singapore leads both Global Mobility at 91.0 and Financial Freedom at 84.2. Germany leads Quality of Life at 90.6. Iceland leads Safety and Security at 90.5.

71.6% of respondents are more likely to consider an additional citizenship in response to global events. Only 2.7% are less inclined.

Only around a third are very confident their existing citizenship will deliver the same security and opportunity over the next decade.

A competitive economy is the area respondents most often feel their government is failing them, cited by 45.4%.

Business and professional opportunity leads the present-day motivations for an additional citizenship at 29.9%, ahead of investment diversification at 24.5% and tax efficiency and wealth structuring at 22.3%.

Around 80% of respondents hold only one citizenship. Roughly 15% hold two, and 5% hold three or more.

USA WCR Rankings

	SCORE	RANK
Overall WCR Rankings	76.8	16
Safety & Security (25%)	65.9	73
Economic Opportunity (20%)	81.3	2
Quality of Life (25%)	84.7	21
Global Mobility (15%)	84.0	13
Financial Freedom (15%)	68.4	26



America's shifting **soft** and **hard power**

The United States recorded the steepest decline of any of the 193 nations measured in a leading global index of national soft power published in January 2026, falling 4.6 points to 74.9. China scored 73.5, leaving the gap between the two at 1.5 points. The sharpest American falls came in perceived generosity, relations with other countries and ease of doing business.

The World Citizenship Index 2026 recorded a similar pattern across harder measures. China led Economic Opportunity at 89.3, ahead of the United States at 81.3 and Ireland at 80.3. Ireland topped the Index overall at 85.1. Singapore led both Global Mobility at 91.0 and Financial Freedom at 84.2. Germany led Quality of Life at 90.6, and Iceland led Safety and Security at 90.5.

Across five motivators and 188 jurisdictions, the United States led none of them, though it ranked highly in most.

The Index measures what a citizenship delivers across the dimensions people weigh when deciding where to build a life, base a business or raise a family. It combines official data from institutions including the World Bank Group and the United Nations with a survey of 546 mass affluent individuals, and it weights each pillar according to what those respondents said matters most.

Read on those terms, the 2026 results describe a redistribution rather than a collapse.

The United States remains a top-tier jurisdiction. It sits second on the pillar that rewards innovation ecosystems, financial infrastructure and institutional depth, and it continues to draw talent and capital at scale. What it no longer does is set the standard others are measured against.

Hard power has moved east

China's economic opportunity rests on market scale and capital-market depth, an advantage that accumulates over decades rather than election cycles. Chinese state media made the comparison explicit during the America 250 celebrations in July 2026, publishing extensive coverage of perceived American decline set against China's gains in exports, electric vehicles, high-speed rail and new energy sectors. Surveys of opinion leaders across Southeast Asia published in April 2026 similarly found a slim majority preferring alignment with Beijing over Washington for the first time. Analysts attributed the swing less to Chinese persuasion than to American withdrawal, citing cuts to public diplomacy and development aid that left space Beijing filled without contest.

The WCR found that developed markets including the United States, Ireland, Japan and the United Kingdom continued to feature in the upper tier of Economic Opportunity because the pillar is multi-dimensional. Innovation and institutional stability still counted, but no longer decided the ranking on their own.

Global Mobility tells a parallel story. Access builds through sustained diplomatic engagement and erodes slowly, which makes it one of the truer measures of a country's reach. Singapore led at 91.0, with Japan and the Republic of Korea tied at 89.6. The top of the ranking became an Asian affair, without the United States. China spent the same period lowering its own threshold at the border. Unilateral short-stay entry arrangements, first trialled for France, Germany and Italy, expanded to cover dozens of European countries and were extended to run until at least 31 December 2026 as part of a wider push to lift inbound travel and engagement. The United States drew headlines over the same months for the opposite reason, as travellers and new arrivals came under increased scrutiny before entering.

Soft power is measured by who wants in

By the conventional test of soft power, whether people want to visit, the United States still performed. The FIFA World Cup, co-hosted on American soil across June and July 2026, broke the all-time tournament attendance record, passing 3.6 million spectators at 99.7% stadium occupancy.

The WCR's data raises a harder question about what American citizens themselves believe. Only around a third of mass affluent respondents said they were very confident their existing citizenship would deliver the same security and opportunity over the next decade. Asked where their current government was failing them, respondents named a competitive economy more often than anything else, at 45.4%, a striking answer set against the pillar where the Index showed the ground shifting fastest.

The market reflected the same sentiment. Wealthy Americans drove record demand for the established Caribbean Citizenship Programmes through 2025 and into 2026, and US nationals accounted for a growing share of applications worldwide. A citizenry that diversifies its own nationality at record rates is sending a signal about confidence, and the signal is not one of complacency.

The policy response, and its limits

The Gold Card, examined in detail later in this report, attempted to convert American desirability into revenue by pricing residency directly. Its first months suggested that pricing a jurisdiction is easier than raising its score.

The picture the 2026 Index describes is not one of American decline.

It is the end of a period in which one jurisdiction could be assumed to lead on every measure that mattered. For globally minded families, that is the condition they now plan within, and it is why so many of them are planning at all.





Economic Opportunity (20%)

Country	Score	Rank
China	89.3	1
United States	81.3	2
Ireland	80.3	3
India	79.9	4
Indonesia	76.9	5



Wealthy Americans are looking to the Caribbean as their Plan B

US nationals accounted for nearly a third of all citizenship applications processed globally in the first quarter of 2026, according to industry-wide figures, confirming American demand as the defining story of the citizenship market this year.

The shift showed most clearly at programme level. Americans made up around half of Antigua and Barbuda's applicants in the early part of 2026, against roughly a quarter across the whole of 2025, a doubling of share inside a year.

US nationals accounted for a substantial share of the demand processed by CS Global Partners over the same period, with the established Citizenship Programme of St. Kitts and Nevis as the routes American families most often weighed.

Market analysis published in July 2026 described American enquiries accelerating steadily through 2025 and into 2026 rather than spiking around any single event, and attributed the trend to political uncertainty and a broader reassessment of reliance on a single jurisdiction.

A hedge, not an exit

The pattern in the applications pointed to acquisition as a standing option rather than a departure plan. Families acquired the citizenship and held it, retaining the ability to relocate, educate a child or open a business elsewhere should circumstances change.

Advisers reported the citizenship sitting within plans that already included trusts, multi-currency holdings and international property, treated as one more exposure to be diversified.

What the WCR data shows

The stated motivations were those of planners. Business and professional opportunity led at 29.9%, ahead of investment diversification at 24.5% and tax efficiency and wealth structuring at 22.3%. Family security and generational protection emerged as the leading strategic benefit when respondents ranked what a second citizenship is for.

The headroom in the market remained substantial.

Around 80% of respondents worldwide held only one citizenship, roughly 15% held two, and 5% held three or more. The American wave matters not because it is large in absolute terms but because it is early, and the curve has considerable room left to run.

Demand grew through the tightening

The American surge arrived during a period in which the Caribbean Programmes deliberately raised their own bar rather than lowered it. Reforms adopted through 2024 to 2026 introduced mandatory interviews and biometric requirements, lifted regional minimum investment thresholds to US\$200,000, and strengthened due diligence throughout.

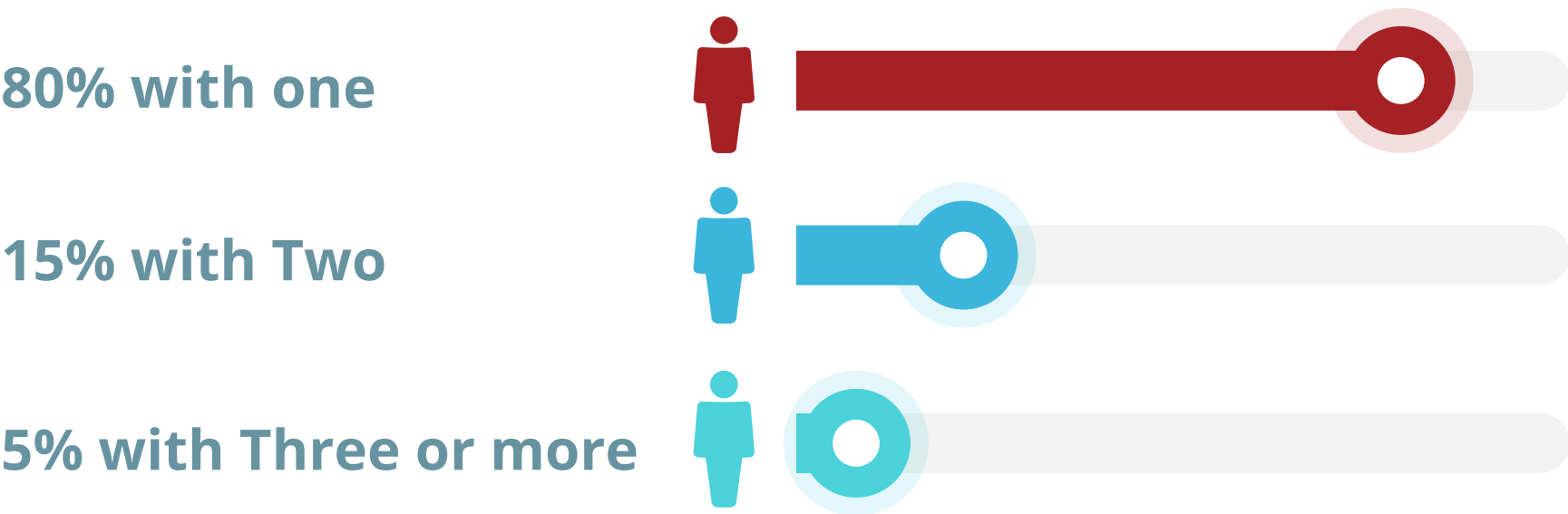
Demand from American applicants grew through those changes, not despite them. Applicants arriving with advisers, structures and long planning horizons favoured programmes that could evidence rigour, and the market data bore that out: interest concentrated on the longest-established routes rather than the cheapest.

The St. Kitts and Nevis Citizenship Programme, the longest-running initiative of its kind, built its standing over four decades of consistent stewardship. Dominica's Programme, established in 1993, followed the same path.

The programmes that endured, applied consistent due diligence and welcomed whole families rather than individuals continued to earn confidence, having declined to compete on price alone. These are Citizenship Programmes rather than residency routes, delivering full citizenship rather than a permission to remain. They require no relocation. They do not draw the holder into a new worldwide tax net. Processing typically runs to a matter of months rather than years.

For a family exposed to a single jurisdiction across their income, their assets and their children's futures, the combination read as prudent rather than exotic.

How many citizenships people hold?





What **Trump's Gold Card** tells us about the value of citizenship

Just one person has been approved under the Gold Card, the Trump administration's \$1 million route to American residency, according to testimony given to lawmakers by Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick in April 2026.

A Department of Homeland Security court filing disclosed that 338 people had submitted requests and 165 had paid the processing fee by spring 2026.

The programme launched on projections of tens of thousands of cards and more than \$100 billion raised, and the administration stated shortly after launch that over a billion dollars in cards had been sold within days.

Set against those claims, the disclosed figures made the Gold Card's first year the most closely watched case study in the investment migration industry: a live test of what a price tag alone can buy.

What the programme offers

Launched by executive order in September 2025 and open to applications from December 2025, the Gold Card asks for a \$1 million contribution to the federal government, plus a non-refundable \$15,000 processing fee, in exchange for an expedited route to lawful permanent residency.

A corporate version allows an employer to sponsor an employee for \$2 million. The route is not a new immigration category. It layers the payment onto the existing EB-1 and EB-2 employment-based green card pathways, treating the contribution as supporting evidence of substantial benefit to the United States. A more expensive Platinum tier, announced alongside it, remained largely non-operational through the first half of 2026.

The promises under pressure

The same DHS filing that disclosed the uptake figures undercut the programme's central promise. The Gold Card website had marketed residency in record time. The filing indicated that Gold Card applicants would not necessarily have their petitions adjudicated faster than any other applicant in the underlying EB categories. The programme's tax position was also clarified through 2026, and not in its favour.



Gold Card holders are taxed on worldwide income like any other lawful permanent resident, with no carve-out for the contribution paid. For an internationally mobile family, that repricing typically dwarfs the headline cost, and advisers reported steering clients toward routes that do not create the exposure in the first place.

The legal foundation came under challenge in the same period. The programme faced multiple lawsuits through 2026, including challenges to the executive authority under which it was created. Because it rests on an executive order rather than statute, a future administration could modify or rescind it by the same mechanism that created it, if the courts do not act first.

Why the WCR predicted this

The World Citizenship Index measures citizenship across five motivators, and the Gold Card competes cleanly on none of them. It confers residency rather than citizenship, and the distinction is not semantic. A green card is a permission to remain, subject to maintenance requirements and revocable on national security grounds, with naturalisation available only later through the standard route.

Measured against the Report's framework, the result was predictable. The pillars reward institutional depth, stability, mobility built through diplomacy and financial systems that inspire confidence, all of which are earned over decades. A jurisdiction cannot buy its way up the Index, and the Gold Card's opening figures suggested buyers understood that before the programme did.



What the market chose instead

The demand the Gold Card failed to capture did not disappear. It moved. Over the same months in which the Gold Card recorded 338 requests, American applications to the established Caribbean Citizenship Programmes reached record levels. Those Programmes offer full citizenship rather than residency. They deliver it in months. They require no relocation. They do not draw the holder into a new worldwide tax net. They rest on national legislation rather than executive discretion, and the longest-running among them have operated continuously for four decades, surviving scrutiny that would have closed a weaker offering.

The WCR data completes the picture. Respondents ranked family security and generational protection as the leading strategic benefit of a second citizenship, a long-horizon motivation that rewards long-horizon instruments. The Gold Card's first year demonstrated the inverse: whatever the number on the card, an instrument that can be rescinded by the same pen that created it does not qualify. Price was never the product. Longevity, legal certainty, due diligence and provision for the whole family were, and remain, what globally minded families actually buy.



338 requests submitted,
165 processing fees paid,
one approval.



About CS Global Partners

CS Global Partners was established in London in 2012 and is headquartered in Mayfair. The firm operates as a consultancy dedicated to providing bespoke citizenship and residency solutions for high-net-worth individuals globally. The specialised team commits to maintaining client confidentiality and focuses on delivering transformative options in citizenship and residency.

The firm's mission empowers governments and individuals, fostering economic growth, stability, and security for enhanced lifestyles. Corporate innovation and excellence drive the culture, with collective expertise delivering transformative results. The emphasis on corporate values and inclusivity creates a dynamic environment that encourages collaborative decision-making and forward-thinking strategies.

A highly proficient legal team backs CS Global Partners, providing strong understanding of the legal frameworks required to make Citizenship by Investment Programmes reputable and successful.

CS Global Partners is one of the few firms in the world with exclusive marketing and advisory mandates for two governments: the Commonwealth of Dominica and the Federation of St. Kitts and Nevis. The firm has worked with both governments to increase foreign direct investment and drive positive transformation.

The firm plays a pivotal role in empowering government institutions for lasting prosperity. Trusted advisory expertise attracts significant foreign direct investment ethically while maintaining a strictly advisory role without interference in decision-making processes. The firm collaborates with governments globally, contributing to the successful promotion and transformation of Citizenship by Investment and Residency by Investment Programmes that significantly impact economic development and global prominence.





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