



# Trump “Gold Card” Program: What We Know, What We Don’t, and What Prospective Applicants Should Consider

In September 2025, the Trump Administration unveiled a new immigration pathway that has generated significant attention - and many unanswered questions. Branded as the “Trump Gold Card,” the program claims to offer a direct route to U.S. lawful permanent residence in exchange for a substantial monetary contribution to the U.S. Treasury.

This monetary contribution is a gift, not an investment, so the funds once expended will not be returned to the donor.

Below is a summary of what has been announced to date, how the Gold Card compares to the long-standing EB-5 investor program, and key legal and practical issues that prospective applicants should carefully evaluate.

## Program Overview

On September 19, 2025, President Trump signed Executive Order 14351, directing the creation of the Trump Gold Card program. The program generally authorizes the issuance of lawful permanent residence (“Green Cards” or “LPR” status) to qualifying foreign nationals who make a \$1 million gift to the U.S. government.

The Administration subsequently launched a dedicated website - [TrumpCard.gov](https://TrumpCard.gov) - and on December 11, 2025, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) released a new petition form, Form I-140G, formally opening the program.

## Key Components

- **\$1 million (per person) gift** to the U.S. government (contrast to the EB-5 petition fee, which is per family)
- **\$15,000 (per person) filing fee** (contrast to the EB-5 petition fee, which is per family)
- **Filing through a newly created Form I-140G** (step one), followed by **consular processing, or potentially adjustment of status** (step two)
- **Process:** The Gold Card promises an expedited employment-based Green Card. The program relies on existing employment based (EB) categories for permanent residence (EB-1 or EB-2) which require applicants to show they either have a demonstrated area of “extraordinary ability” or that their work is in the U.S. national interest. At this time, there is no guidance as to how applicants

should select between the EB-1 or EB-2 categories, and no guidance as to how USCIS will consider that Gold Card applicants have satisfied the EB-1 or EB-2 criteria as a matter of law.

- **Adjustment of Status and Visa Availability:** After approval of the I-140G, applicants must move to the second step of the green card process. USCIS has not yet confirmed whether applicants must consular process step two in their home countries, or whether Form I-140G supports concurrent filing of an I-485 Adjustment of Status application. The I-140G form instructions specify that consular processing is required, but the EB-1 and EB-2 categories allow for concurrent filing, suggesting that it would be permitted for Gold Card applications. Visa availability will track the EB-1 and EB-2 categories, meaning backlogs may apply for applicants born in China and India for EB-1 petitions or worldwide for EB-2 petitions, as reflected in the December 2025 Visa Bulletin.
- **Timing:** The government promises Gold Card-based cases will be processed much faster than traditional petitions in the EB-1 and EB-2 categories. The Gold Card website states that “once an applicant’s processing fee and application are received, the process should take weeks.” Because the second step of the green card process (consular processing or adjustment of status) requires substantial vetting (i.e. for criminal and national security issues) and the financial documentation required for the Gold Card will add an additional layer of vetting, it is hard to imagine how the government will be able to carefully screen applicants in a matter of weeks. And in fact, processing times are not guaranteed.

If approved, applicants receive a permanent green card, not a conditional card as is the case for the established EB-5 investment program.

## How the Gold Card Differs from the EB-5 Immigrant Investor Visa Program

While the Gold Card may be compared to the EB-5 classification, the two programs are structurally very different:

Topic	Gold Card	EB-5
Required Amount	\$1 million	\$800,000 (for investment in a Targeted Employment Area (TEA))
Nature of Funds	Unrestricted gift	Investment (may be returned in certain instances and individuals may earn a return on the investment)

Topic	Gold Card	EB-5
Job Creation	None required	10 full-time jobs in the United States required
Lawful Source of Funds	Required	Required
Type of Green Card	Permanent	Conditional (must apply to make permanent after approx. 2 years)
Visa Backlogs	Yes (e.g. China & India)	None currently
Concurrent I-485 application filing	Unclear	Permitted
Program Stability	New, untested	Long-established

Notably, in the EB-5 program, one investment covers the investor as well as their spouse, and minor children, while early Gold Card guidance suggests each family member will require a separate donation and filing fee - a potentially dramatic cost difference.

## Key Features of the Petition

- Lawful source and path of funds documentation, proving that the \$1 million gift can be traced to a legitimate source
- Disclosure of all financial accounts anywhere in the world, including cryptocurrency accounts
- 20 years of employment history, plus all government or military service (regardless of timing)

This level of scrutiny is more expansive than that which applies in the EB-5 program, particularly with respect to crypto disclosures.

## Compliance, Vetting, and Enforcement Risk

Applicants should expect:

- Enhanced anti-money laundering (AML) checks
- OFAC screenings
- Criminal and civil background checks in all prior countries of residence

- Rigorous review of crypto holdings and transfers
- Vetting of applicant's social media and online accounts

Although the government has promised expedited processing times, these reviews may result in lengthy adjudications and increased likelihood of Requests for Further Evidence (RFEs).

## Legal and Policy Uncertainty

As a brand-new program created by executive action, the Gold Card raises broader questions:

- **Timing:** How long will it take to become a lawful permanent resident under the Gold Card program? Is it really any faster than the existing green card categories? There are no guaranteed processing times for the Gold Card and although the government promises to process the applications in “weeks” it’s hard to imagine how they could complete all the vetting required by the standard green card process, plus the additional financial vetting required by the Gold Card program, in such a brief interval.
- **Process:** Can you process in the U.S. by filing an adjustment of status, or must you consular process in your home country? For applicants already in the U.S., the latter could be a significant burden especially if multiple family members.
- **Privacy:** What are the privacy concerns, given that the application requires disclosure of all financial accounts anywhere in the world, including cryptocurrency accounts?
- **Potential Future Revocation:** Would a future administration rescind or narrow the program? In other words, if a new President is elected, could that administration revoke green card status obtained under the program?
- **Litigation:** Will stakeholders (including the EB-5 industry) challenge it in court?

These risks should factor into any decision to proceed.

## Recommended Preparatory Steps

For individuals considering the Gold Card, early preparation is critical:

1. Consult with a GYH attorney
2. Financial Readiness
  - Assemble full source-of-funds documentation
  - Map the path of funds from origin to donation
3. Account Inventory
  - Prepare a complete list of financial and crypto accounts

- Collect statements and ownership records
4. Strategy Planning
- Evaluate EB-1 vs. EB-2 NIW qualifications. At this time, there is no guidance as to how USCIS will consider whether a Gold Card applicant has satisfied the EB-1 or EB-2 statutory, regulatory, and binding precedent criteria as a matter of law.
  - Consider visa availability and timing based on country of birth
  - Monitor guidance on adjustment of status to lawful permanent residence

## Final Thoughts

The Gold Card represents a significant shift in U.S. employment-based immigration, utilizing categories traditionally reserved for foreign nationals of extraordinary ability and those working in the national interest, to allow for gift-based fulfillment of criteria. While the Gold Card claims to offer a potentially faster path to permanent residence for high-net-worth individuals, it also introduces uncertainty as to overall cost, future viability, length of processing times, and several unanswered questions. These are risks that should not be underestimated.

As USCIS Gold Card guidance continues to evolve, careful legal analysis and advance planning will be essential.

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*\*Disclaimer: This information is presented for the purposes of general education and does not constitute legal advice. For advice about a specific case, please consult legal counsel.*