

《Chinese immigrants dominate US investment program》

Chinese investors dominated a U.S. immigration scheme last year. It allows people to earn a green card in just three years by investing in a commercial enterprise in the United States. Nearly 90 percent of the applicants to the program come from China, but life is tough for many Chinese immigrants in the country.

about 9,000 Chinese people received an American green card last year through investment immigration, and the program only gives out 10,000 green cards every year. That explains why so many immigration fairs were held in Shanghai. At one event, 200 immigration and investment agencies took part.

To be part of the immigration program, people must invest a minimum of U.S.\$500,000 in a commercial enterprise that will create at least 10 jobs in the U.S. And they must live in the country for at least six months a year, for three years.

“There are great investment opportunities in the United States, that’s why America attracts more foreign direct investment every single year than any other country. An independent organization says that doing business in America is second in the world. The most open place for doing business after Hong Kong is the United States,” said former U.S. ambassador to China Gary Locke.

America remains a top destination for Chinese people because of its high quality universities. Many people who take part in the program say they decided to move abroad for the children.

But one immigration expert says, people need to think long and hard about what life will be like in a foreign country.

“based on my 10 years of experience, I always remind clients to think about three things before applying. First is whether they can live in America for almost three years as a part of the immigration process,” said Hou Xincui, general manager of Shanghai Foreign Affairs Service Center.

“Secondly, you need to be prepared to pay more tax based on the U.S. taxation system. Thirdly, the investment immigration program has risks. The success rate was around 85 percent, and the failures were mainly due to the project’s insufficient job creation or improper application materials.”

One-hundred sixty-eight years ago, the first Chinese immigrants, two men and one woman, arrived in San Francisco during the Gold Rush. To date, 6 million Chinese immigrants are living in the U.S., and the number does not include undocumented ones. Chinese immigrants are now the third largest foreign-born group in the U.S.

Zhu Ke, an American citizen who is originally from Shenyang, works as a tour guide in California, and says he has seen many cases of Chinese people struggling in American society. Zhu says it is hard to fit into the American society and still refuses to speak English on camera even after spending 11 years in the U.S.

“It’s hard for Chinese immigrants to find a proper job in the U.S., especially when English is not your first language. The lives of Chinese immigrants are polarized here,” Zhu said.

“It’s easier for people who are already wealthy or have skills in technology fields to work and live. But it’s hard for people like me, who was a student and had to work for every living cost. We normally have all worked hard in Chinese restaurants, and tried many ways to get a green card.”

Zhu said it took him four years to become an American citizen. Now he is living in Los Angeles with his wife and two daughters. With all the ups and downs in the past, he has returned to his home country only twice in 11 years. But he says like most immigrants, he still loves his home country.

