



Officer Jon Luke Evans receives his police badge. He was hired in May as a reserve officer for Old Orchard Beach. He was arrested in late July by ICE officers after he unlawfully attempted to purchase a gun for his employment. (OLD ORCHARD BEACH POLICE DEPARTMENT VIA AP)

# Employers have used E-Verify for years. ICE's arrest of Maine officer raises new questions.

Old Orchard Beach has been accused of 'reckless reliance' on the government program, but experts say there's not much more employers can do to vet hires.

By PATRICK WHITTLE and MAE ANDERSON  
*Associated Press*

OLD ORCHARD BEACH — The case of a Maine police officer arrested by immigration authorities even though he was vetted by a government system called "E-Verify" has raised questions about what employers can do to make sure they're employing people who can legally work.

E-Verify is an online system that compares information entered by an employer from an employee's documents with records available to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Social Security Administration. It's used to determine the employment eligibility of citizens and noncitizens.

Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security Tricia McLaughlin accused Old Orchard Beach of "reckless reliance" on the E-Verify program when it hired Jamaica national Jon Luke Evans, who was later detained and agreed to leave the country earlier this month.

But it's the government's own program. And experts say there's not a whole lot more employers can do in terms of vetting.

"I think employers are between

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## 'IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT TRUTH, BUT WHO GETS TO DECIDE WHAT'S TRUE'



Josie Holtzman and Isaac Kestenbaum, of Portland, got the idea for their podcast "Midnight Sun" after learning about Teddy Kyle Smith's case while they were living in Alaska and working for a public radio station. Jonas Bell Pasht, the producer of "Blood & Myth," said the couple were part of the "core creative brain trust" for the documentary and worked alongside filmmakers through the entire process. (DEREK DAVIS/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

# Mainers' true crime podcast is basis for documentary on Alaska shooting

By RAY ROUTHIER  
*Staff Writer*

The true crime genre is wildly popular at least partly because it's pretty straightforward. There's a violent, horrific crime and the audience hears the true story of what happened, grisly plot twists and all.

But longtime audio producers Josie Holtzman and Isaac Kestenbaum of Portland came upon a true crime story a few years ago that raised the question of what truth is and who decides. While working in Alaska they were introduced to the case of Teddy Kyle Smith, an Inupiaq man arrested after refusing to answer questions about his mother's death and then shooting two men. He claimed his violence was guided by the Inukuns, myth-



Teddy Kyle Smith, left, and James Dommek Jr. in a scene from the Hulu documentary "Blood & Myth." As in the podcast, Dommek is the narrator of the film and part of the story. Dommek, a musician and storyteller, is the one who first introduced Holtzman and Kestenbaum to Smith's story. (DISNEY)

ical, sinister creatures of Inupiaq folklore.

Collaborating with another Inupiaq man — musician and storyteller James Dommek Jr. — Holtzman and Kestenbaum ventured into Alaskan villages to create a podcast called "Midnight Son." It was released as an Audible

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# White House to release funds for AmeriCorps

Maine was one of more than two dozen states challenging the deep cuts to the national service volunteerism program.

By RANDY BILLINGS  
*Staff Writer*

Maine Attorney General Aaron Frey announced Friday that the Trump administration has agreed to release more than \$180 million in federal funding for AmeriCorps, the federal agency for national service and volunteerism.

The administration sought to cut the funding this spring, prompting more than two dozen states, including Maine, to sue. Maine had approximately 200 AmeriCorps fellows as of this spring.

In June, a federal judge issued a preliminary injunction on the administration's plans to 90% of the AmeriCorps workforce, cancel contracts and close \$400 million worth of programming. The injunction only applied to the states involved in the lawsuit.

But Frey said the administration continued to withhold \$184 million in funding, prompting the coalition of states to file an amended complaint.

Frey said the administration had a deadline of Thursday to respond to the suit. Rather than fight, it agreed to release the funding.

"At the last minute, when required to provide legal justification as to why it withheld funds, the administration instead did what it should have done from the beginning and released the funding," Frey said in a written statement. "In order to ensure Mainers receive the benefit of programs established under the law, I will continue to work with my colleagues to hold the administration to account when its actions ignore what is legally required."

The AG's office said the funding would be dispersed nationwide as soon as possible. It's unclear how much of that funding was destined for Maine.

The funding cuts to the AmeriCorps program were among a host of major moves

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# Maine's space industry, facing pushback on land, looks to the sea

The Maine Space Corporation, which lawmakers recently voted to make a nonprofit, is looking into sea-based launch platforms.

By STACEY ZHANG  
*The Maine Monitor*

The training facility of the Maine Space Corporation, the quasi-governmental agency tasked with building the infrastructure for the state's nascent space industry, sits at the end of a humming hallway in Brunswick Landing's Hangar 5.

On an exceptionally hot day in mid-July, in the absence of air conditioning, the windows were shuttered to keep the facility cool.

Three machines used to test products for space conditions — each about the size of a household fridge — sat in the corners of the room, encircling a paper-strewn round table and a few office chairs in the center.

The Maine Space Corporation, which recently filed for 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, was created in 2022 by the Maine

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The Maine Space Corporation is in talks with The Spaceport Company about acquiring access to its launch platform. The Virginia-based startup conducted a test launch in the Gulf of Mexico, seen here in 2023. (THE SPACEPORT COMPANY)

