

How 5 Mainers are using their \$300 affordability checks

One is giving it to Bobby Charles' gubernatorial campaign, a few are paying their bills and a couple want to treat their grandchildren.

By **ETHAN HORTON**
Staff Writer

Hundreds of thousands of Mainers will receive \$300 checks from the state government over the next several weeks. Many already have. The "affordability checks," which came from the state's rainy day fund, were a pet policy for Gov. Janet Mills'

final state budget and are in the mail to Maine residents who met income requirements and filed state taxes for 2025. All told, it's a \$150 million-plus injection into the state's economy. For some, the check is trivial, a drop in the bucket on monthly bills. For other Mainers, it's a small, but mighty lifeline. We asked Mainers to tell us how they were spending their \$300 affordability checks. Here's how five of them responded.

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Frank Sanborn Jr., of Lewiston, said he's going to use his check to register his car. (RUSS DILLINGHAM/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

DIDN'T GET YOUR CHECK? THIS MIGHT BE WHY

By **ETHAN HORTON**
Staff Writer

More than 500,000 Mainers are expected to receive \$300 checks from the state government through the mail. Funded straight out of Maine's rainy-day piggy bank, the "affordability checks" are being sent automatically to people who meet two conditions: They filed their 2025 state taxes and

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TODAY'S ALMANAC

September 8, 2026

Today is the 251st day of 2026. There are 114 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On Sept. 8, 1974, one month after taking office, President Gerald R. Ford granted a "full, free, and absolute pardon" to former President Richard Nixon for any crimes committed during Nixon's presidency.

Also on this date:

In 1504, Michelangelo's towering marble statue of David was unveiled to the public in Florence, Italy. In 2016, California and federal regulators fined Wells Fargo a combined \$185 million, alleging the bank's employees illegally opened millions of unauthorized accounts for their customers in order to meet aggressive sales goals. In 2022, Queen Elizabeth II, who spent more than seven decades on the British throne, died at age 96. **Today's Birthdays:** Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vermont, is 85. Civil rights activist Ruby Bridges is 72. Actor Martin Freeman is 55. Actor Jonathan Taylor Thomas is 45. MLB pitcher Gerrit Cole is 36.

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Marcus Byers practices creating beads while stick welding at York County Community College's Center for Excellence in Manufacturing and Trades in Sanford on Aug. 25. Byers is among a group of students learning to weld in a 10-week accelerated class. The class isn't part of the Workforce Pell, but could be after the Maine Community College System submits its programs for review in December. (PHOTOS BY GREGORY REC/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER)

Maine to get millions in federal funds for workforce training programs

Workforce Pell allows students to use grant money for classes that last eight to 15 weeks.

By **LANA COHEN**

SANFORD — On a Tuesday morning in late August, the accelerated welding class at York County Community College was humming along. Two students were lying on the floor, finding the right angle to weld pipes like those on nuclear submarines. Others worked at their individual workstations, cubicle-type spaces outfitted with a workbench, stool, vent and thick red plastic curtain. Large industrial fans whirled, and bright yellow sparks hit the cement and bounced upward. The students are in a 10-week course that could soon qualify for a new source of federal financial aid.

Maine is preparing to roll out a program that will expand students' access to Pell

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Instructor Michael Aaskov talks with student Marty McCue about a pipe fitting. For a program to qualify for Workforce Pell, it must be deemed "high-skill," "high-wage" or "in-demand." Aaskov said he tells his students they might not be welders forever, but the skill can lead to careers in fabrication, engineering or estimation.

Why 9/11 and its many griefs land differently 25 years later



What the attacks and their aftermath have come to mean isn't a single viewpoint shared by everyone.

By **DEEPTI HAJELA**
Associated Press

NEW YORK — When the planes crashed and the buildings fell on that sunny September morning 25 years ago, the shock waves of dismay and grief went far past downtown New York City,

rural western Pennsylvania and just outside Washington, D.C. They radiated through every part of the United States in communities large and small, tearing at Americans' sense of safety and their place in the world. Hearts were

broken across the nation, not just of those who lost their loved ones but among strangers who mourned for them, the Sept. 11 attacks leaving no one unaffected in an unwanted moment of horrifying togetherness. A quarter of a century later, the effects linger. We all live in a post-9/11 world,

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A crowd watches as the World Trade Center burns in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001. (ERNESTO MORA/ASSOCIATED PRESS)