



LOSFA

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

— A PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS —

DON'T BLOW YOUR TOPS
WHY IT PAYS TO MAKE GOOD GRADES

Anna Breaux
Outreach Coordinator



LOSFA

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

— A PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS —

ABOUT **LOSFA**

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) is a Program of the **Louisiana Board of Regents** that strives to be Louisiana's first choice for college access by promoting, preparing for and providing college access support to any student, any age, anywhere in Louisiana. LOSFA administers the state's scholarship and grant programs and the state's Internal Revenue Code Section 529 college savings program.



BOARD *of* REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

TOPS

Please remember that:

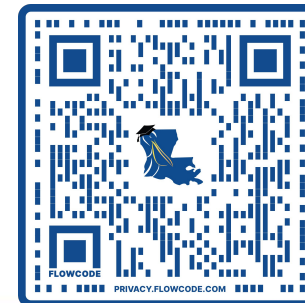
- Funding for TOPS is contingent upon legislative appropriations.
- If TOPS is not fully funded, TOPS Awards and stipends will be determined on a pro-rata basis.
- Students can opt out of receiving a TOPS payment(s) if the program is not fully funded.



TOPS AWARD AMOUNT



- TOPS Award Amounts are set at the maximum TOPS “fully funded” amount, which is equal to the tuition charged by the individual institutions for the 2016-2017 academic year
- This amount will not increase even if the institution raises tuition, unless the Louisiana Legislature enacts legislation to raise the TOPS Award Amounts.
- See TOPS Award Amount chart: Scan QR code to access



CITIZENSHIP

A student must be a U.S. citizen, a permanent resident who is eligible to apply for citizenship, or a child of a non-citizen serving in the Armed Forces or honorably discharged from the Armed Forces.



RESIDENCY

An independent student or a parent or court-ordered custodian of a dependent student must have been a resident of the state of Louisiana and actually reside or live in Louisiana for the 24 months prior to high school graduation.

- For 2026 graduates, residency must have been established no later than April 2024.

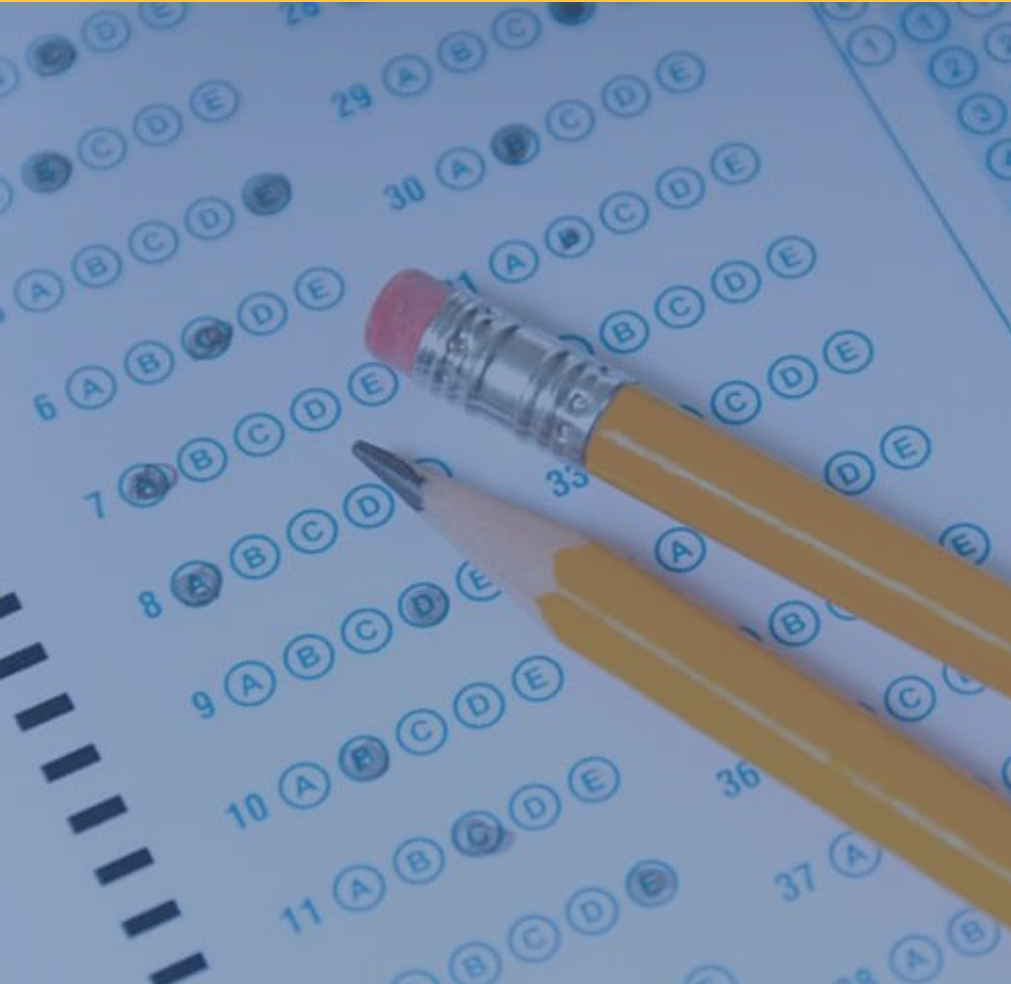


CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

- Have no criminal convictions.
 - Excludes misdemeanor traffic violations.
- A student who has a “final criminal conviction” may not accept a TOPS Award.
 - A juvenile conviction is generally not considered a final criminal conviction.
 - If the severity of the crime committed by a juvenile is such that he/she is tried as an adult, a subsequent conviction could be a “final criminal conviction.”
 - The student should contact his/her attorney to determine if their conviction is a “final criminal conviction.”

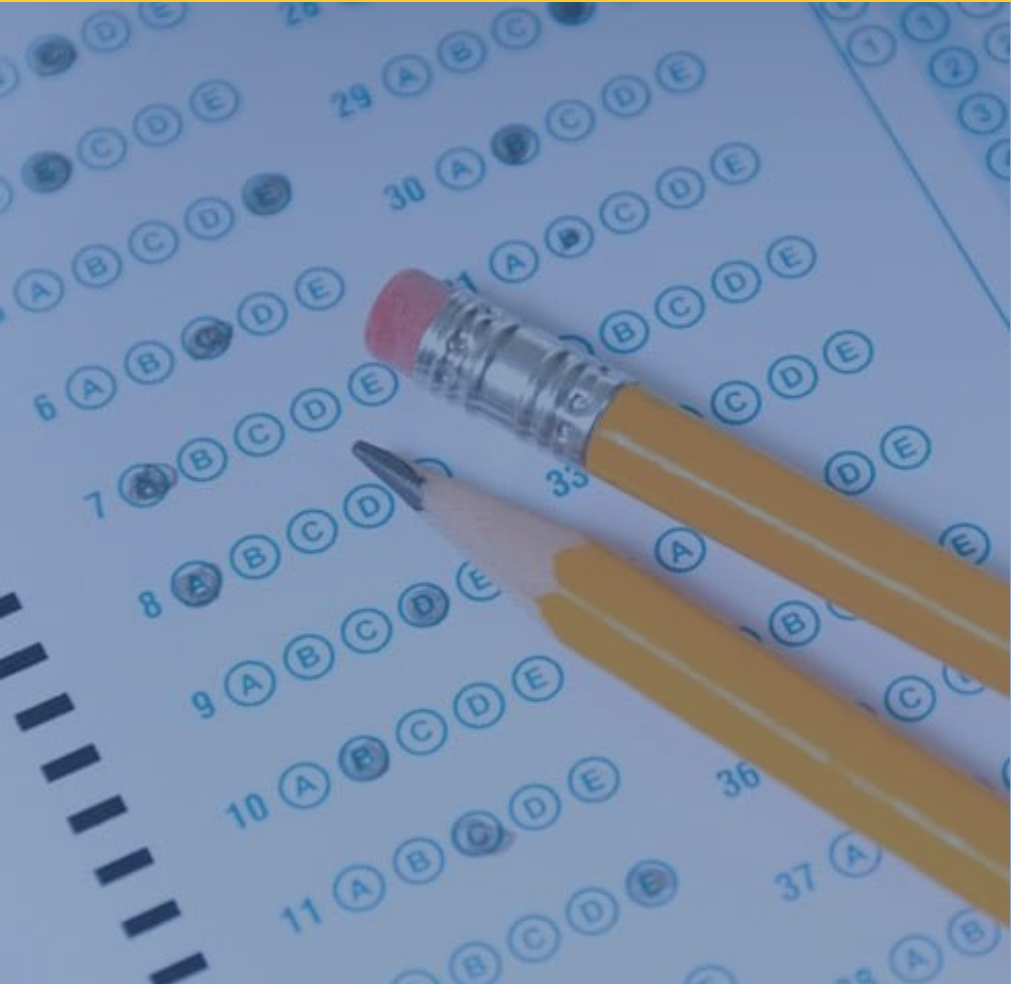


ACT



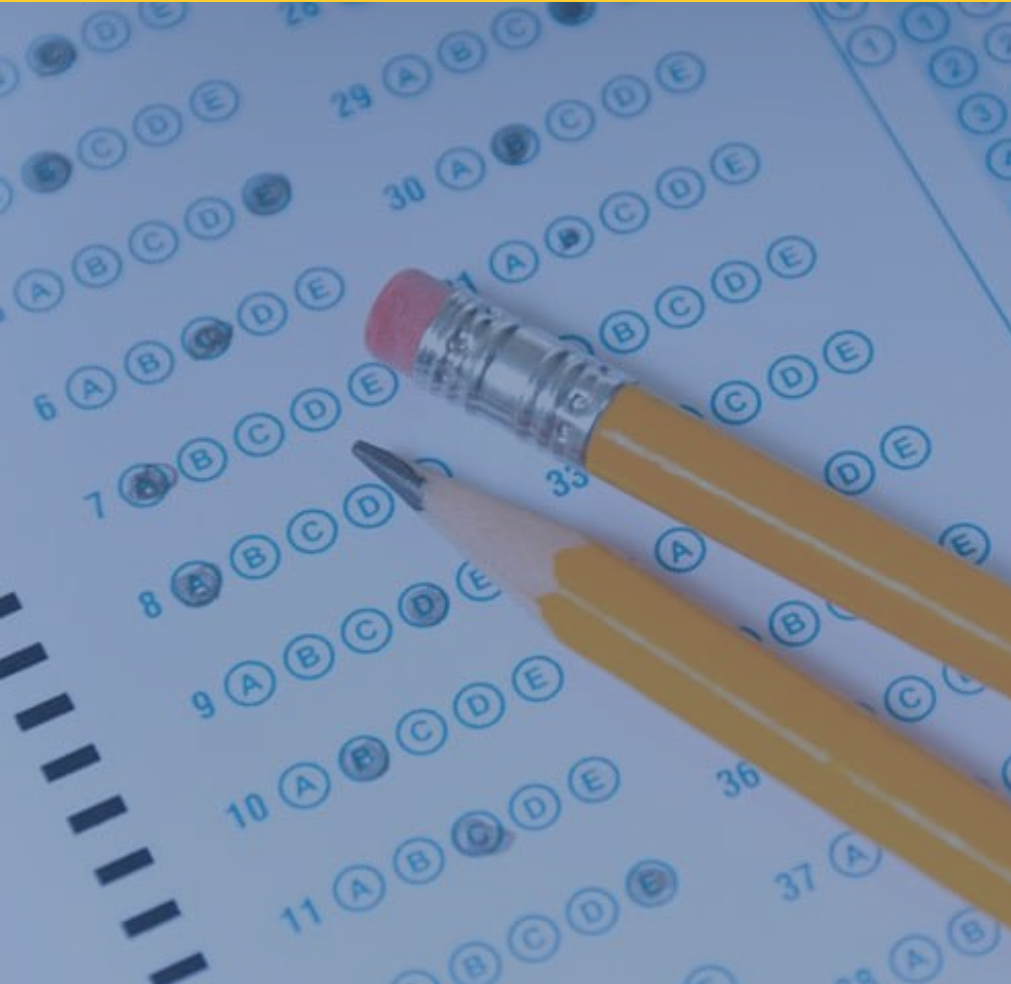
- Highest composite score from a single test will be considered
 - TOPS does not consider the essay portion of the ACT in calculating the composite score needed to qualify
 - TOPS does not consider superscores
- ACT Registration
 - TOPS Code 1595
 - Date of Birth/Full Name/Email

ACT



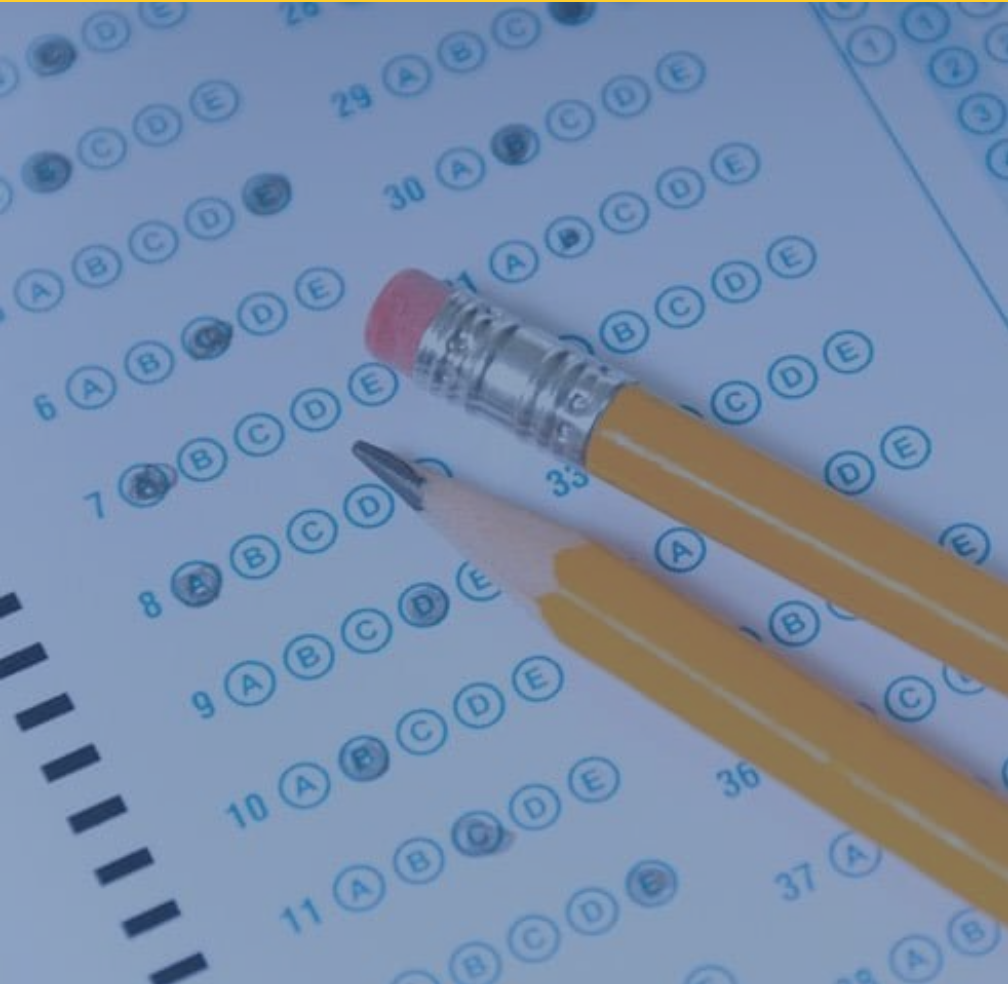
- ACT Deadlines for 2026 Graduates
 - Without penalty: April 11, 2026
 - Loss of one semester eligibility: June 13, 2026 or July 11, 2026
 - Special tests may be taken prior to July 31st
 - A June or July ACT score can be used to upgrade TOPS Awards with a one semester or two quarter penalty
 - Students who fail to achieve a qualifying ACT score before August 1st of the graduating year shall not be considered for an award.

CHANGES TO ACT TESTING



- LOSFA is aware of ACT Inc.'s plan to make the Science portion of the ACT test optional, beginning with National online testing in spring 2025 and then for school-day testing in spring 2026.
- Louisiana R.S. 17:5024, Section B, (1), a-d, states that the ACT score must be a composite score.
- A student can take any of the ACT test options and use a composite score to qualify for TOPS.

SAT



- An equivalent SAT score may be substituted for the ACT score.
 - TOPS does not consider the essay portion of the SAT in calculating the composite score needed to qualify
- SAT Registration
 - Scholarship Code **9019**
- SAT Test Deadlines
 - Without Penalty: March 14, 2026
 - Loss of one semester eligibility: May 2, 2026 or June 6, 2026

CLASSIC LEARNING TEST (CLT)

TOPS NOTICE



Beginning in Fall 2025 and effective with the high school graduating class of the 2024-2025 academic year, the Classic Learning Test (CLT) may be submitted in fulfillment of the examination component (ACT & SAT) of the eligibility criteria for all TOPS awards.

- The Classic Learning Test (CLT) can now be used to qualify for TOPS.
- Please note that eligibility requirements for a TOPS Award may differ from admission requirements at the institution you wish to attend.
- Make sure you're familiar with admissions requirements by speaking to an admissions representative or visiting the institution's website.

TOPS CORE CURRICULUM



- All TOPS core curriculum courses must be completed by the date of high school graduation.
- Distance learning courses approved by the high school may be used to qualify for TOPS.
- College courses taken in the classroom, online, or by correspondence may be used to qualify for TOPS provided that they are determined to be equivalent courses and appear on the student's official high school transcript.

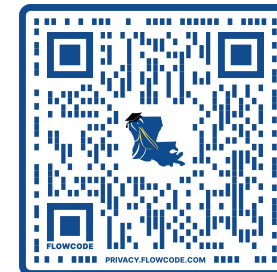
TOPS CORE CURRICULUM



- The TOPS core curriculum is for each year from the graduating class of 2026 through the graduating class of 2029.
- Different requirements are applicable to each of these graduating classes.
- Please check the LOSFA website at mylosfa.la.gov for detailed information on the core curriculum required for each graduating class.

TOPS CORE CURRICULUM GPA

- TOPS Core Curriculum Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated on a 4.00-point scale, except the following designated courses that will use a 5.00-point scale:
 - Advanced Placement (AP) courses
 - International Baccalaureate (IB) courses
 - Gifted courses
 - Dual Enrollment courses
 - Honors courses
 - Articulated courses offered for college credit by the Louisiana School for the Math, Science, and the Arts.
- The courses currently designated to be calculated on the 5.00-point scale can be viewed [here](#).



TOPS CORE CURRICULUM GPA

The cumulative GPA for a TOPS Award will be calculated using only those grades achieved in the core curriculum courses.

- If a student has completed more than 19 credits for courses that are included in the core curriculum, the GPA will be calculated by using the course in each core curriculum category for which the student received the highest grade.
- If a student is substituting two units for a one-unit category, the grades from the two units will be averaged together and substituted as one unit.
- “P” grades are not included in the TOPS Core GPA calculation.
- GPA cannot be rounded up.

TOPS AWARD LEVELS



OPPORTUNITY AWARD
PERFORMANCE AWARD
HONORS AWARD
EXCELLENCE AWARD
TECH AWARD

OPPORTUNITY AWARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 2.50 minimum TOPS Core Curriculum GPA
- ACT score equal to the prior year's state average, but never less than 20
 - SAT Score of 1030
 - CLT Score of 66
- Completion of the TOPS Core Curriculum
- TOPS general eligibility requirements

OPPORTUNITY AWARD BENEFITS

Provides a TOPS Award Amount or a portion of a TOPS Award Amount based on funds appropriated at a Louisiana public institution

- Or a weighted average award amount at a LAICU private institution (contingent upon appropriations)
- TOPS does not cover any fees (examples of fees may or may not include: academic excellence fees, energy surcharges, technology fees, books, room & board, parking fees, lab fees).
- A TOPS Award may be combined with other forms of financial aid up to the “Cost of Attendance” for the institution.

OPPORTUNITY AWARD **BENEFITS**



- May be used to pursue:
 - Academic undergraduate degree
 - Vocational or technical certificate
 - Non-academic degree
- Students who use their Opportunity Award to pursue a technical program will receive the same benefits and be held to the same retention requirements as a TOPS Tech Award recipient.
 - The award may be used at eligible Louisiana cosmetology and proprietary schools.

OPPORTUNITY AWARD BENEFITS



- May be received for a maximum of eight semesters or 12 quarters
- Not available for summer terms except for students enrolled in a Qualified Summer Session and contingent upon sufficient appropriations

OPPORTUNITY AWARD **BENEFITS**



- Any recipient who successfully completes a Bachelor's degree in less than 8 semesters or 12 quarters of award benefits may receive any remaining terms of eligibility for graduate study.
 - The TOPS Award payment for TOPS-eligible students enrolled in a graduate/professional program is limited to the full tuition charged by a school for enrollment in the respective graduate program OR the maximum TOPS Award amount charged for undergraduate full-time enrollment at the highest cost public institution (LSU-HSC-NO), whichever is less.
 - Performance and Honors Award recipients will receive their stipends.

PERFORMANCE AWARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.25 minimum TOPS Core Curriculum GPA
 - ACT score of 23
 - SAT score of 1130
 - CLT score of 80
- Completion of the TOPS Core Curriculum
- TOPS general eligibility requirements

PERFORMANCE AWARD BENEFITS



- Provides the same benefits as the Opportunity Award, plus
 - A \$400 annual stipend (contingent upon appropriations)

HONORS AWARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.50 minimum TOPS Core Curriculum GPA
 - ACT score of 27
 - SAT score of 1260
 - CLT score of 91
- Completion of the TOPS Core Curriculum
- TOPS general eligibility requirements

HONORS AWARD **BENEFITS**



- Provides the same benefits as the Opportunity Award, plus
 - A \$800 annual stipend (contingent upon appropriations)

EXCELLENCE AWARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 3.50 minimum TOPS Core Curriculum GPA
 - ACT score of 31
 - SAT score of 1390
 - CLT score of 101
- Completion of the TOPS Core Curriculum
- TOPS general eligibility requirements

EXCELLENCE AWARD BENEFITS



- Public Institutions - Provides an annual amount equal to tuition and fees or \$12,000, whichever is less
- LAICU Institutions – Equal to tuition and fees or \$8,500, whichever is less

TOPS TECH AWARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

- 2.50 minimum TOPS or TOPS Tech Core Curriculum GPA
 - Minimum ACT score of 17
 - SAT score of 920
 - WorkKeys Silver Level Score
 - CLT score of 54
- Completion of one of two TOPS Core Curricula
 - Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Excellence Award curriculum
 - TOPS Tech Jumpstart Core Curriculum

TOPS TECH AWARD BENEFITS



- May be used to pursue:
 - Associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education programs, including skill, occupational, vocational, technical, certificate, and academic, that the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) and the Board of Regents (BOR) determine are aligned to state workforce priorities.
 - Universal Transfer Pathways approved by BOR.
- May receive for two years
- Summer terms are covered for students attending a technical program (funding contingent upon appropriations). Summer attendance is not required.

TOPS ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

A large group of pelicans, including both brown and white varieties, are gathered on a rocky shore. The background shows a body of water and a distant shoreline with trees. The word "PUBLIC" is overlaid in large white letters.

PUBLIC

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM



- Louisiana State University – Alexandria
- Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge
- Louisiana State University – Eunice
- Louisiana State University – Shreveport
- LSU Health Sciences Center – New Orleans
- LSU Health Sciences Center – Shreveport

SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM



- Southern University – Baton Rouge
- Southern University – New Orleans
- Southern University – Shreveport

UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM



- Grambling State University
- Louisiana Tech University
- McNeese State University
- Nicholls State University
- Northwestern State University
- Southeastern Louisiana University
- University of Louisiana – Lafayette
- University of Louisiana – Monroe
- University of New Orleans

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM



- Louisiana Technical College – all campuses
- Baton Rouge Community College
- Bossier Parish Community College
- Central Louisiana Technical Community College
- Delgado Community College
- L.E. Fletcher Technical Community College
- Louisiana Delta Community College
- Northshore Technical Community College
- Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College
- Nunez Community College
- River Parishes Community College
- South Louisiana Community College
- SOWELA Technical Community College

TOPS ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS



PRIVATE

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

LAICU



- Centenary College
- Dillard University
- Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University (Formerly Our Lady of the Lake College)
- Louisiana Christian University
- Loyola University New Orleans
- New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary
- St. Joseph Seminary College
- Tulane University
- University of Holy Cross
- Xavier University

TOPS APPLICATION



There are two options for applying for a TOPS Scholarship:

- FAFSA® (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) – www.studentaid.gov
 - The FAFSA® allows you to apply for TOPS, other state aid, and all federal aid.

OR

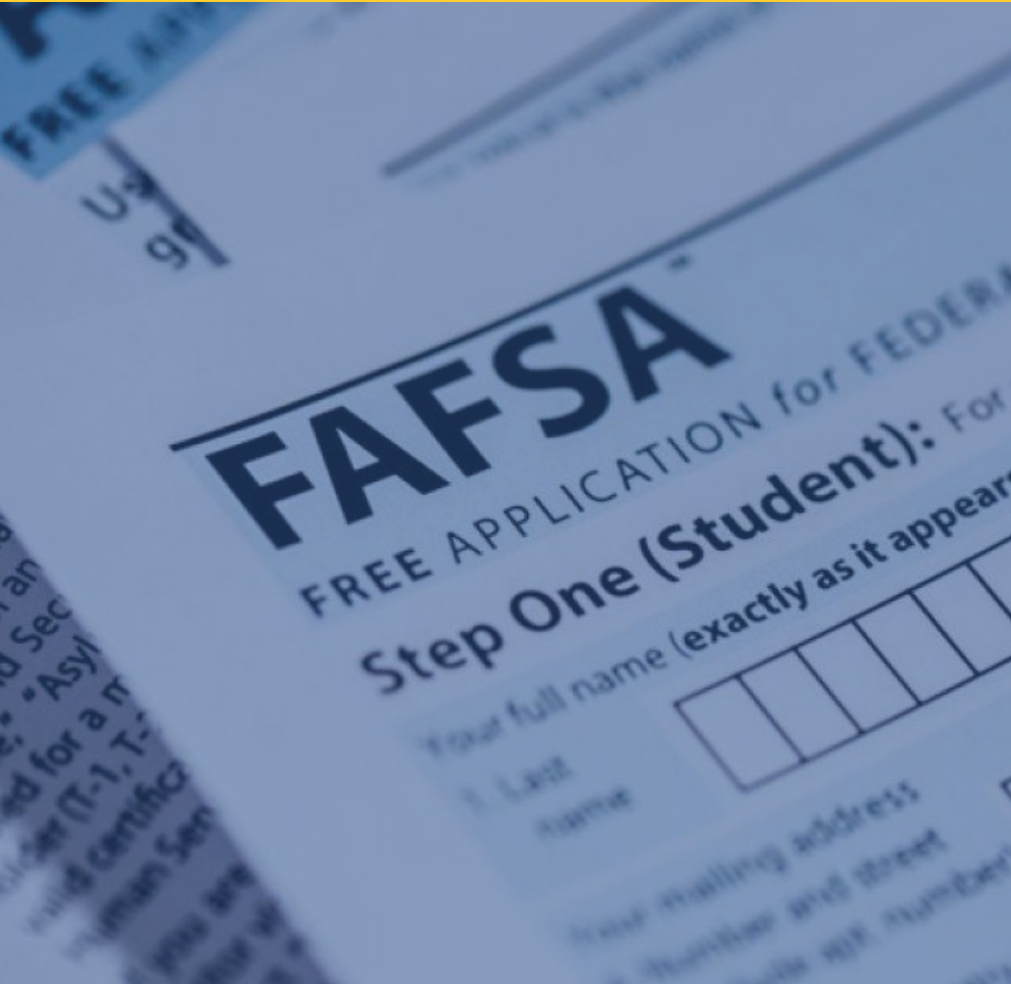
- TOPS Online Application – www.mylosfa.la.gov
 - Use this application to apply for TOPS only.
 - Do not complete if you have completed the FAFSA®.

TOPS ONLINE APPLICATION



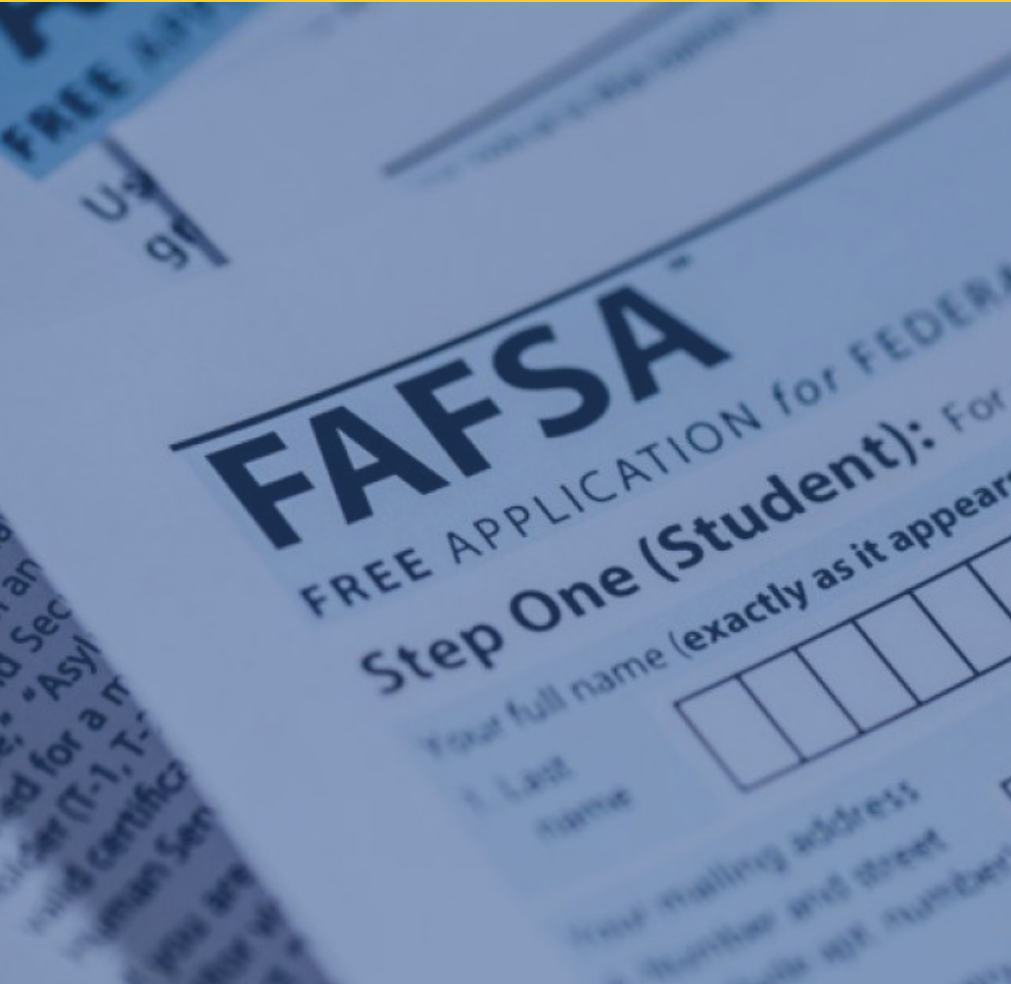
- The TOPS Online Application is available to students who can demonstrate they do not qualify for federal financial aid.

FAFSA®



- The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) is the application for both federal and state aid programs.
 - Be sure to fill out the FAFSA® even if you don't think you'll qualify for need based aid.
- The FAFSA® is the only application needed for the TOPS scholarship.
 - Louisiana's priority deadline is February 1.
- You should never be asked to pay to fill out the FAFSA®. It is a FREE application.

FAFSA®



- The only financial aid directly determined from the FAFSA® data is eligibility for the federal Pell Grant.
- The primary purpose of the FAFSA® is to establish the student's Student Aid Index (SAI).
- The SAI is used by the institution in a process called packaging to determine your eligibility for campus-based aid programs including FSEOG, GO Grant, federal work study, and William D. Ford Direct Loans.

TOPS PROCESSING CYCLE



- Students apply for TOPS
 - FAFSA® data is electronically sent to LOSFA by the U.S. Department of Education.
 - TOPS Online Applications are entered directly on the LOSFA website.
- LOSFA downloads ACT and SAT scores for students who have included the ACT code 1595 on their ACT registration or students who have included the SAT code of 9019 on their SAT registration.

TOPS PROCESSING CYCLE



- Processing cannot begin until LOSFA can match your FAFSA® or TOPS Online Application data and ACT data.
- LOSFA runs the TOPS Eligibility Program each Monday and Thursday night.

TOPS PROCESSING CYCLE



TOPS Award notifications are emailed each Friday.

- Award notifications are emailed to the email address the student provided on the FAFSA® or TOPS Online Application.
- The award letter includes the student's Rights and Responsibilities.
- Students can check their status on the Student Hub.
- Students who have not received notification of their TOPS Award eligibility by mid-July should contact LOSFA.

TOPS PROCESSING CYCLE



- A Master Roster of TOPS-eligible students is available for Louisiana institutions to download from LOSFA each Monday.
- Institutions electronically bill LOSFA for the TOPS Awards of eligible students who are enrolled full time through the fifteenth class day of the semester or ninth day of the quarter.

AWARD ACCEPTANCE

Must enter an eligible institution as a full-time student by the fall semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation



AWARD ACCEPTANCE: MILITARY SERVICE



- A TOPS-eligible student who joins the Armed Forces on active duty within one year of high school graduation must enter an eligible institution by the semester immediately following the one-year anniversary of separation from active duty.
 - Must have received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions
 - Must apply within one year of separation from active duty

NATIONAL GUARD TOPS RECIPIENTS



TOPS recipients serving in the Louisiana National Guard shall receive:

- The National Guard tuition exemption in lieu of the TOPS tuition amount
- \$300 per semester for books and supplies
- Plus TOPS stipend
 - Performance Award: \$400 per semester
 - Honors Award: \$800 per semester
 - Excellence Award: \$1,000 per semester

NATIONAL GUARD PATRIOT SCHOLARSHIP



National Guard Patriot Scholarship:

- The National Guard Patriot Scholarship provides scholarships to Louisiana National Guard members who are enrolled in a Louisiana public postsecondary institution and who are eligible for the Louisiana National Guard tuition waiver.
- This program provides for the payment of mandatory fees charged to the student by the institution as funds are appropriated.

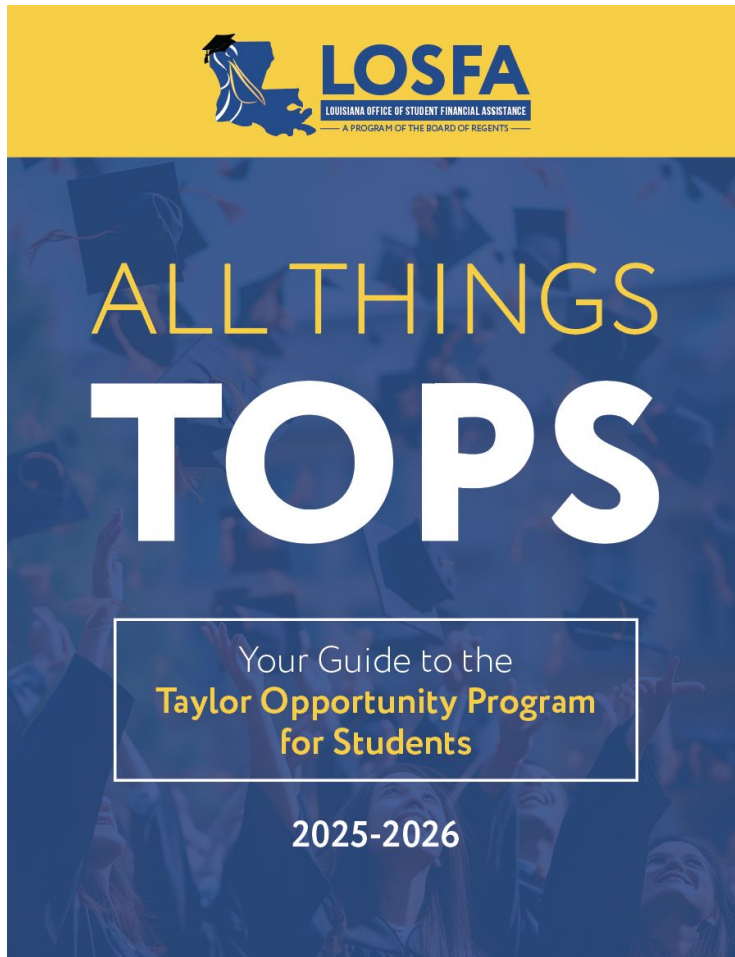
FAFSA® SUBMISSION DATES

When a Student Is Attending College (School Year)	When a Student Can Submit a FAFSA®	Which Year's Income Information Is Required?
July 1, 2026 – June 30, 2027	October 1, 2025 – June 30, 2027	2024
July 1, 2027 – June 30, 2028	October 1, 2026 – June 30, 2028	2025
July 1, 2028 – June 30, 2029	October 1, 2027 – June 30, 2029	2026
July 1, 2029 – June 30, 2030	October 1, 2028 – June 30, 2030	2027



RESOURCES

TOPS RESOURCES



SCAN HERE
TO ACCESS TOPS Q&As



FAFSA® RESOURCES



FAFSA® GUIDE

HOW TO COMPLETE THE FAFSA® AT A GLANCE

- 1 Create an FSA ID
- 2 Start the 2026-2027 FAFSA®
Opening in October 2025



FOLLOW THESE STEPS TO COMPLETE YOUR FORM:

- Click "start here" and log in with the FSA ID information that you created (after your FSA ID has been verified by the Social Security Administration).
- Some of your information will prepopulate from the FSA ID.
- Click through those screens.
- For the financial information sections, you will use 2024 information.



SCAN HERE
TO ACCESS LOSFA'S
FAFSA® WEBSITE



SCAN HERE
TO ACCESS LOSFA'S
ACT WEBSITE

SCAN HERE
TO ACCESS LOSFA'S
FAFSA® WEBSITE



COMPREHENSIVE ADVISING

STATEWIDE COMPREHENSIVE COLLEGE ACCESS ADVISING SERVICES

**Any Student. Any Age.
Anywhere in Louisiana.**

No matter where you are on the college access journey, LOSFA's Comprehensive Advising Officers can assist you.

We can help with:



Identifying how to prepare and pay for college through scholarships, grants, and financial aid.



Matching your interests, skills, and passions with a career and connecting you to employers through career exploration, job shadowing, internships, and job placement opportunities.



Discovering pathways to earn your credential or degree, finding the school that's the best fit for you, and connecting you with available support and wrap-around services.

Scan here →
for additional information



GET CONNECTED WITH STUDENT NETWORK GROUPS

VIRTUAL NETWORK GROUPS:

- Nursing
- Accounting/Finance
- Engineering
- Information Technology/
Computer Information
Systems
- Behavioral Health Profession
- Education
- Postsecondary Transition
- Multidisciplinary-For all

Providing Louisiana's Students the Opportunity to:

1

Network with other students throughout Louisiana.

2

Discover resources and opportunities for successful degree completion, internships, and job placement.

3

Connect with professionals and/or employers from their respective fields.

Scan here →
for additional information



CONNECT WITH **LOSFA**



@losfa



@losfa



@losfa1000



@losfa001

CONTACT **LOSFA**

ASK
LEX



- LEX is LOSFA's virtual response assistant
- LEX is available on LOSFA's Website at www.mylosfa.la.gov
- Available **24/7** to answer questions about LOSFA Programs

ON THE **WEB**



www.mylosfa.la.gov



custserv@la.gov
GeauxFAFSA@la.gov

VIRTUAL **OFFICE HOURS**

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Monday – Friday



QUESTIONS?

custserv@la.gov