LOSFA

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

A PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS

ALL THINGS TOPS

GRADUATING CLASS OF 2027

April Bergens

Revised 08/21/2026

PHOTOGRAPHY AND RECORDING NOTICE

Photography, video, and audio recording may occur during this event. LOSFA may use these materials in its educational, informational, and promotional communications, including websites, social media, and publications. If you do not wish to be photographed or recorded, please notify a LOSFA staff member.



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 administers the state's postsecondary scholarship and grant programs. LOSFA 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.

REGENTS

BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

TOPS REMINDERS

Please be aware of the following:

- Funding for TOPS is contingent upon appropriation.
- The Louisiana Legislature adjourns in June. LOSFA will know after the session ends if TOPS is fully funded.
- 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 as the tuition charged by the institution 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

TOPS
OPHE

TOPS
TECH

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 2027 graduates, residency must have been established no later than April 2025.



CRIMINAL CONVICTIONS

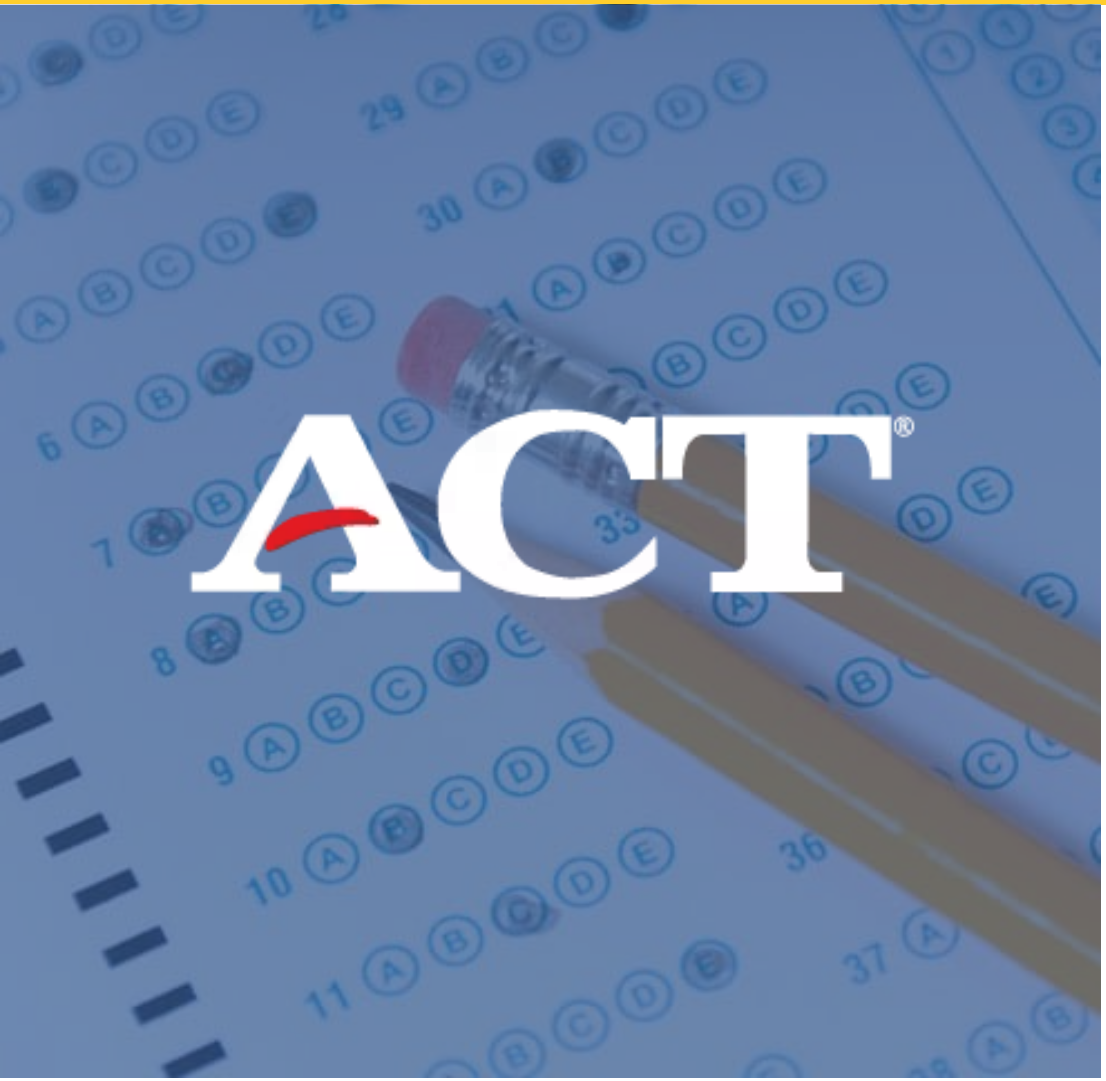
- Have no criminal convictions
  - Excludes misdemeanor traffic violations
- A student who has a “final criminal conviction” may not accept a TOPS award.
  - A juvenile conviction is generally not considered a final criminal conviction.
  - If the severity of the crime committed by a juvenile is such 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.”



APPROVED HIGH SCHOOLS

- In order to be considered for TOPS, the student must attend a Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) APPROVED HIGH SCHOOL.
- All Louisiana public schools are approved.
- If the student attends a non-public school, it must be approved by BESE in order for the student to be considered for TOPS.
  - To view the non-public schools approved by BESE, visit https://www.louisianabelieves.com/resources/library/nonpublic-schools
  - Choose the Approval by Brumfield v Dodd document for the year the student graduated/will graduate from high school to determine if your child's non-public school is approved.

ACT

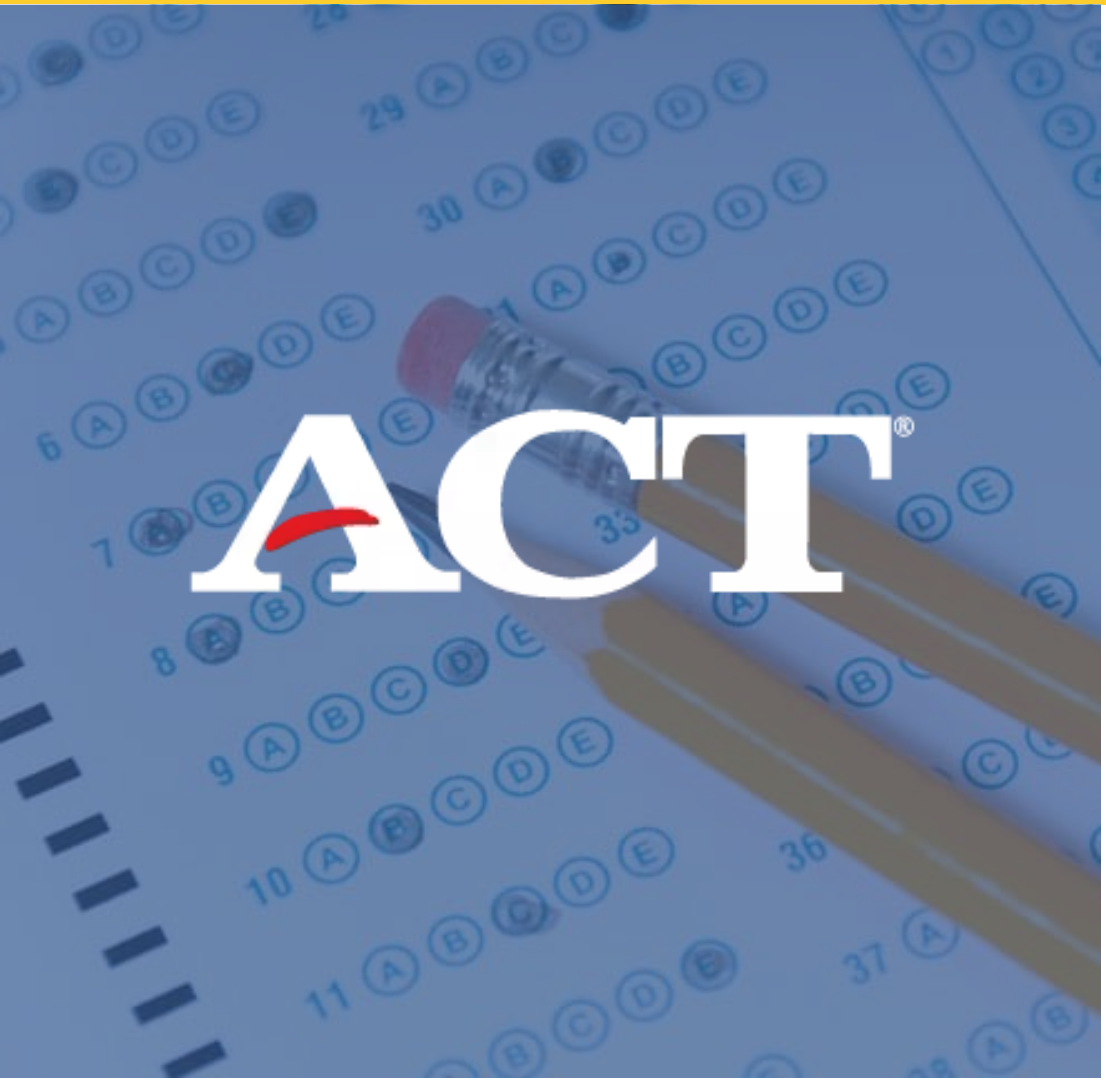


- Highest composite score from a **single** test will be considered
  - TOPS does not consider the essay portion of the ACT in calculating the composite score needed to qualify
  - TOPS does **not** consider superscores

ACT Registration

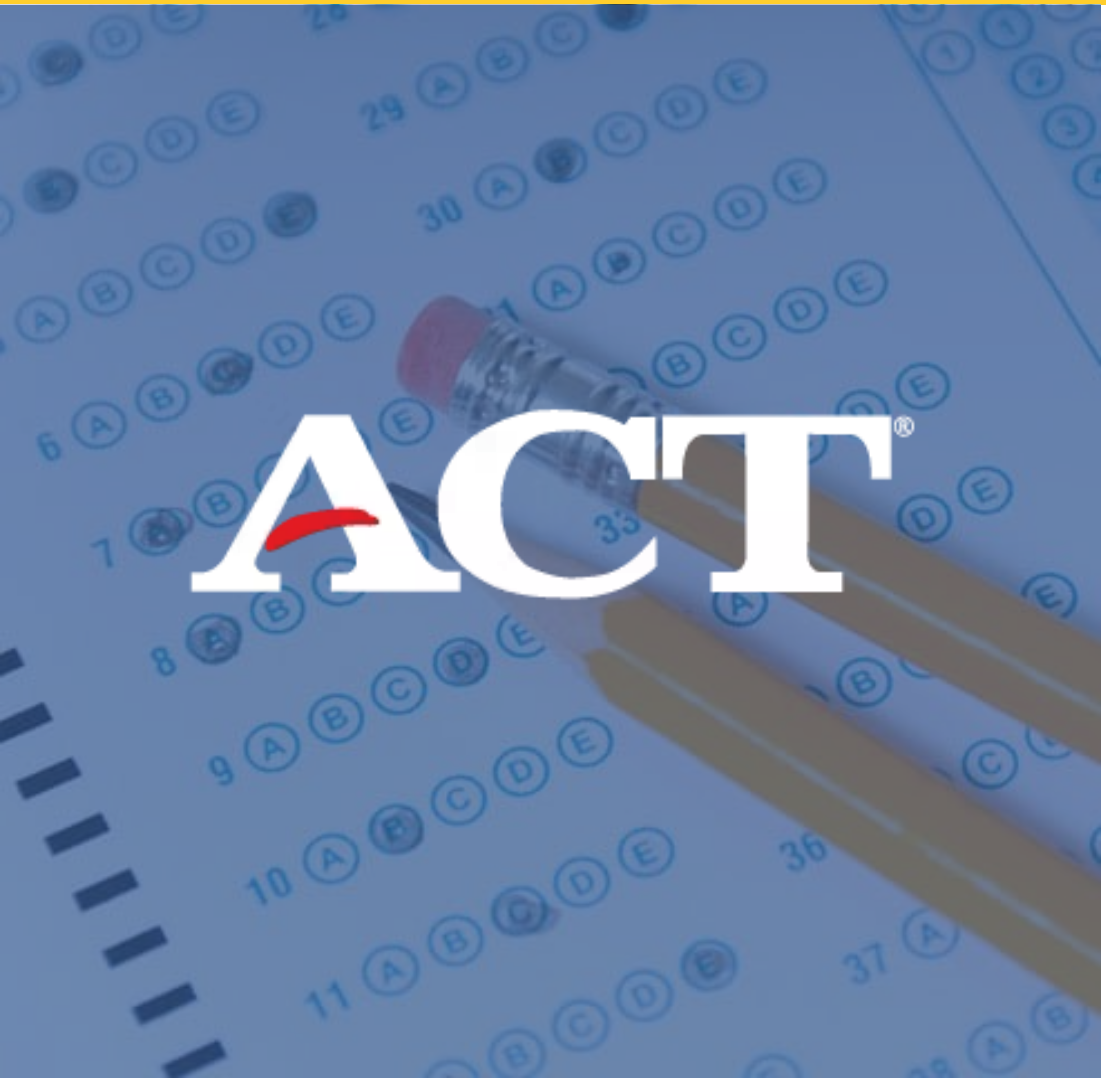
- TOPS Code **1595**
- Date of Birth

ACT



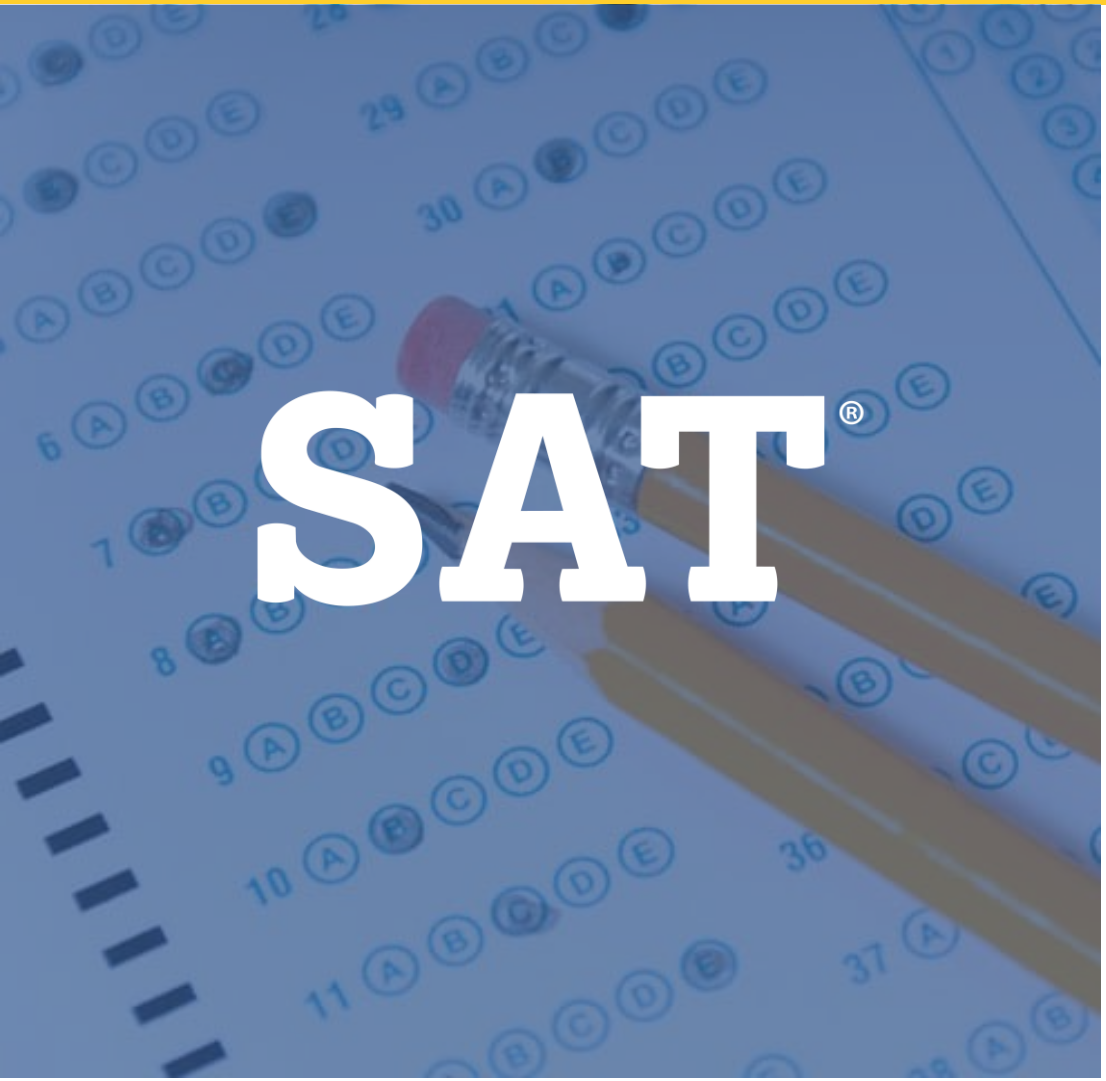
- ACT Deadlines for 2027 Graduates
  - Without penalty: April 10, 2027
  - Loss of one semester eligibility: June 12, 2027, or July 10, 2027
    - Special tests may be taken prior to July 31st
    - A June or July ACT score can be used to upgrade TOPS Awards with a one-semester or two-quarter penalty
  - Students who fail to achieve a qualifying ACT score before August 1st of the graduating year shall not be considered for an award.
  - TOPS uses the highest composite score achieved and does not use superscoring.

CHANGES TO ACT TESTING



- Beginning in April 2025, the ACT Science section became optional, and students may choose to take the ACT national test with or without it.
- The ACT will consist of the required English, Math, and Reading (EMR) sections.
- According to 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 6, 2027
  - Loss of one semester of eligibility: May 1, 2027, and June 5, 2027

CLT



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.

CLT Test Deadlines

- Without Penalty: March 20, 2027 (remotely proctored); April 7, 2027 (in school)
- Loss of 1-semester eligibility: April 17, 2027 (remotely proctored); May 22, 2027 (in school); and June 17, 2027 (remotely proctored)

- 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 AWARD LEVELS

OPPORTUNITY AWARD
PERFORMANCE AWARD
HONORS AWARD
EXCELLENCE AWARD
TECH AWARD

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 2027 through the graduating class of 2031.
- Different requirements are applicable to each of these graduating classes.
- Please check the LOSFA website at losfa.laregents.edu for detailed information on the core curriculum required for each graduating class.

CORE CURRICULUM

TOPS OPPORTUNITY, PERFORMANCE, HONORS, AND EXCELLENCE FOR GRADUATES OF 2027

TOPS OPPORTUNITY, PERFORMANCE, HONORS, AND EXCELLENCE CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

ENGLISH = 4 UNITS	COURSES
1 Unit	English I
1 Unit	English II
1 Unit from the following:	English III, AP English Language Arts and Composition, or IB English III (Language A or Literature and Performance)
1 Unit from the following:	English IV, AP English Literature and Composition, or IB English IV (Language A or Literature and Performance)

TOPS OPPORTUNITY, PERFORMANCE, HONORS, AND EXCELLENCE CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

MATH = 4 UNITS	COURSES
1 Unit	Algebra I or Integrated Mathematics I
1 Unit	Geometry or Integrated Mathematics II
1 Unit	Algebra II or Integrated Mathematics III
1 Unit from the following:	Algebra III; Advanced Math - Functions and Statistics, Advanced Math - Pre-Calculus, Pre-Calculus, or IB Math Methods I (Mathematical Studies SL); Calculus, AP Calculus AB, or IB Math Methods II (Mathematics SL); AP Calculus BC; Probability and Statistics, Statistical Reasoning, or AP Statistics; IB Further Mathematics HL; IB Mathematics HL; AP Pre-Calculus; AP Computer Science A*

*AP Computer Science A may be used for one of the following: a math credit or a foreign language credit. It may not be used for both.

TOPS OPPORTUNITY, PERFORMANCE, HONORS, AND EXCELLENCE CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

SCIENCE = 4 UNITS	COURSES
1 Unit	Biology I
1 Unit	Chemistry I
2 Units from the following:	Earth Science; Environmental Science or Environmental Awareness; Physical Science or Principles of Engineering; Agriscience I and Agriscience II (one unit combined); Chemistry II or AP Chemistry or IB Chemistry II; AP Environmental Science or IB Environmental Systems; Physics I, AP Physics I, AP Physics B, or IB Physics I; AP Physics C: Electricity and Magnetism, AP Physics C: Mechanics, or IB Physics II, or AP Physics II; Biology II or AP Biology or IB Biology II or Human Anatomy and Physiology

TOPS OPPORTUNITY, PERFORMANCE, HONORS, AND EXCELLENCE CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

SOCIAL STUDIES = 4 UNITS	COURSES
1 Unit from the following:	U.S. History, AP U.S. History, or IB U.S. History
1 Unit from the following:	Civics, Government, AP U.S. Government and Politics: Comparative, or AP U.S. Government and Politics: United States
2 Units from the following:	Western Civilization, European History, or AP European History; World Geography or Physical Geography, AP Human Geography, or IB Geography; World History, AP World History, or IB World History; History of Religion; IB Economics, Economics, AP Macroeconomics, AP Microeconomics; AP Psychology; or African American History

TOPS OPPORTUNITY, PERFORMANCE, HONORS, AND EXCELLENCE CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

	COURSES
FOREIGN LANGUAGE = 2 UNITS	Foreign Language, both units in the same language, which may include the following: AP Chinese Language and Culture, AP French Language and Culture, AP German Language and Culture, AP Italian Language and Culture, AP Japanese Language and Culture, AP Latin, AP Spanish Language and Culture, IB French IV, IB French V, IB Spanish IV, IB Spanish V; Mandarin Chinese I-IV, Hindi I-IV, Portuguese I-IV, Vietnamese I-IV
OR	
COMPUTER SCIENCE = 2 UNITS	Computer Science, AP Computer Science A*, Computer Coding as a Foreign Language I, Computer Coding as a Foreign Language II

TOPS OPPORTUNITY, PERFORMANCE, HONORS, AND EXCELLENCE CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

ART = 1 UNIT	COURSES
1 Unit from the following:	Performance course in Music, Dance or Theatre; Fine Arts Survey; Art I, II, III, and IV; Talented Art I, II, III, and IV; Talented Music I, II, III and IV; Talented Theater Arts I, II, III, and IV; Speech III and Speech IV (one unit combined); AP Art History; AP Studio Art: 2-D Design; AP Studio Art: 3-D Design; AP Studio Art: Drawing; AP Music Theory; IB Film Study I; IB Film Study II; IB Music I; IB Music II; IB Art Design III; IB Art Design IV; IB Theatre I, Drafting; Media Arts 1-IV; Photography I; Photography II; Digital Photography; Digital Image and Motion Graphics; Digital Storytelling; Engineering Design and Development; Sound Design

CORE CURRICULUM

TOPS TECH FOR GRADUATES OF 2027

TOPS TECH CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

UNITS	COURSES
1	English I
1	English II
2	English III, English IV, AP or IB English courses, Business English, Technical Writing, or comparable Louisiana Technical College courses offered by Jump Start regional teams as approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

TOPS TECH CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

UNITS	COURSES
1	Algebra I; or both Algebra I, Part 1 and Algebra I, Part 2; Integrated Mathematics I; or an applied or hybrid algebra course
1	**Geometry, Integrated Mathematics II, or an applied Geometry course**
2	Algebra II; or Integrated Mathematics III, Math Essentials, Financial Literacy, Business Math, Algebra III, Advanced Math -Functions and Statistics, Advanced Math - Pre-Calculus, Pre-Calculus, or comparable Louisiana Technical College courses offered by Jump Start regional teams as approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

TOPS TECH CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

UNITS	COURSES
1	Biology
1	Chemistry I, Earth Science, Environmental Science, Agriscience I and Agriscience II (both for one unit), Physical Science, Physics, or AP or IB science courses
1	U.S. History, AP U.S. History, or IB U.S. History
1	Civics, Government, AP U.S. Government and Politics: Comparative, or AP U.S. Government and Politics: United States

TOPS TECH CORE CURRICULUM

For the Graduating Class of 2027

UNITS	COURSES
9	In Jump Start course sequences, workplace experiences, and credentials. A student shall complete a regionally designed series of Career and Technical Education Jump Start coursework and workplace-based learning experiences leading to a statewide or regional Jump Start credential. This shall include courses and workplace experiences specific to the credential, courses related to foundational career skills requirements in Jump Start, and other courses, including career electives, that the Jump Start regional team determines are appropriate for the career major.

TOPS CORE CURRICULUM GPA

- TOPS Core Curriculum Grade Point Average (GPA) is calculated on a 4.00-point scale, except for 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 Math, Science, and the Arts.
- The courses currently designated to be calculated on the 5.00-point scale can be viewed here.

Scan here → for additional information



OPPORTUNITY AWARD

The cumulative grade point average (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

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)
- 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 be held to the same GPA requirements as a TOPS Tech Award recipient

- The award may be used at eligible Louisiana cosmetology and proprietary schools.
- 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
- $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
- $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

On the TOPS University Diploma Pathway	On the TOPS Jumpstart Diploma Pathway Must achieve at least two of the following:
Complete the TOPS OPHE Core Curriculum with a minimum TOPS Core GPA of **2.50**	Complete the TOPS Tech Jumpstart Core Curriculum with a minimum TOPS Core GPA of **2.50**
Earn one of the following minimum test scores: • Composite ACT: **17** • WorkKeys: **Silver Level** • SAT: **920** • CLT: **54**	Earn one of the following minimum test scores: • Composite ACT: **17** • WorkKeys: **Silver Level** • SAT: **920** • CLT: **54**
	Earn **9** early college credits

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 the Board of Regents (BOR).
- Students must complete their program of study within three years.
- Summer terms are covered for students attending a technical program (funding contingent upon appropriations). Summer attendance is not required.

PUBLIC

TOPS ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM



- Louisiana State University – Alexandria
- Louisiana State University – Baton Rouge
- Louisiana State University – Eunice
- Louisiana State University – New Orleans (Formerly UNO)
- 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

LOUISIANA COMMUNITY AND TECHNICAL COLLEGES

LOUISIANA
COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGES

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

PRIVATE

TOPS ELIGIBLE INSTITUTIONS

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.losfa.laregents.gov**
  - Use this application to apply for TOPS only.
  - Do not complete if you have completed the FAFSA®.

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 has an agreement with ACT, Inc that requires them to electronically report scores for students who indicate they are a resident of Louisiana. Additional agreements are in place with SAT and CLT to electronically report scores to LOSFA.
- You can also have scores sent to LOSFA by using our ACT Code (1595), SAT Code (9019), or selecting TOPS/LOSFA in the drop-down box on the CLT during registration for the test.

TOPS PROCESSING CYCLE

- Processing cannot begin until we can match your FAFSA® or TOPS Online Application data and ACT/SAT/CLT data.
- Must have received all TOPS home study documentation.
- 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 eligible for payment as of the 15th class day of the semester or the 9th day of the quarter.

AWARD ACCEPTANCE

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

- TOPS Tech recipients are not required to enroll full-time.

LOSFA'S STUDENT HUB

- LOSFA's Student Hub allows students and/or parents to be able to track a student's progress for a TOPS Award while in high school and throughout postsecondary education.
  - Once a student turns 18 years of age or is attending a postsecondary institution as a first-time, full-time freshman, parental consent must be given in the Student Hub for LOSFA to release information to the parent.
- Features in the Student Hub:
  - TOPS Tracker (High School Courses and GPA)
  - ACT/SAT Scores
  - TOPS Award Tracker (College Courses and GPA)
  - Request for Exceptions to Full-Time Enrollment (College)
  - TOPS Award Payment to the institution student is attending

AWARD ACCEPTANCE: RETURNING OUT-OF-STATE STUDENTS

- Any TOPS-eligible student who enrolls in an out-of-state institution may return to Louisiana and accept their TOPS award
- All Returning Out-of-State Students must meet the following:
  - Must have met all TOPS continuation requirements that would have applied had the student been enrolled in an eligible in-state institution
  - Must apply for award reinstatement by July 1 following the academic year in which the student returns to Louisiana
  - Student awards will be retroactively paid for semesters attended in Louisiana if approved, provided they meet all continuation requirements.
  - TOPS eligibility will be reduced by the number of semesters attended out of state

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.

Scan here ⟶
for additional information

TOPS RETENTION

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS

- Should apply annually by July 1st by completing the Renewal FAFSA®
- Must be continuously enrolled on a full-time basis during the academic year
  - A student is considered full-time for the semester if they are carrying full-time hours through the 15th class day of the semester or the 9th day of the quarter.
- TOPS Tech recipients may enroll part-time but must use all of their award eligibility within 3 years.
  - TOPS OPHE recipients enrolled in a technical program must be enrolled full-time.

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: CREDIT HOURS

Must earn 24 credit hours each academic year

- Failure to earn 24 hours will result in permanent award cancellation.
- Hours earned in advanced placement may not be used.
- Hours earned during any intersession held between the beginning of the fall semester and the beginning of the following fall semester can be used.
- Hours earned in required remedial courses may be used.
- "Earned Hours" are hours successfully completed with a passing grade ("D" or better).
- TOPS Tech recipients are not required to earn 24 credit hours each academic year but must maintain continuous enrollment.
  - TOPS OPHE recipients enrolled in a technical program must earn 24 credit hours each academic year.

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: ACADEMIC YEAR (COLLEGE)

- Begins with the fall term of the award year and concludes immediately before the next fall term commences.
- All intersessions and summer sessions are included.

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: TOPS AND SUMMER SESSIONS

The TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Excellence Awards will not pay for college summer sessions except when:

- You have earned at least 60 hours of college credit.
- The summer session is required in your degree program for graduation, and you enrolled for at least the minimum number of hours required for the degree program.
- You can complete your program's graduation requirements in the summer session.
- The course(s) taken during the summer session is required for graduation in the program in which you are enrolled and is only offered during the summer session.
- The summer session is conducted for a nonacademic program in which you are enrolled.

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: SUMMER SESSIONS

- Students who do not meet the TOPS summer session criteria may always attend a summer session at their own expense.
- An award made for summer school expends one semester or term of TOPS eligibility.
- Funding is contingent upon appropriation.

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: CREDIT HOURS

Exceptions to the continuous enrollment or 24-hour requirement may be granted by LOSFA for reasons beyond the student's control

- Parental Leave
- Physical Rehabilitation Program
- Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program
- Temporary Disability – Self
- Care of Immediate Family Member With a Temporary Disability
- Permanent Disability
- Exceptional Educational Opportunity
- Religious Commitment
- Death of an Immediate Family Member
- Military Service – Student
- Military Service - Spouse
- Transfer to a Selective Enrollment Program
- Unavailability of Courses
- Natural Disaster
- Exceptional Circumstances
- Must request within 6 months of award cancellation. If on active duty with the armed forces, must request within 6 months from release of active duty.

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: GPA

AT THE END OF EACH ACADEMIC YEAR, THE FOLLOWING CUMULATIVE COLLEGE GPA MUST BE MAINTAINED

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: OPPORTUNITY AWARD



Opportunity Award

- 2.30 GPA (24-47 hours)
- 2.50 GPA (48+ hours)
- Opportunity award recipients who fail to maintain the retention GPA will be suspended.

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: PERFORMANCE, HONORS & EXCELLENCE AWARDS



Performance, Honors and Excellence Awards

- 3.00 GPA
- Performance or Honors award recipients who fail to maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPA will revert to the Opportunity award (Students will be funded only if they meet the Opportunity Award retention requirements)
  - Once the recipient reverts to the Opportunity award, the Performance or Honors award may not be reinstated
- Excellence award recipients who fail to maintain a 3.00 cumulative GPA will revert to the Opportunity award

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: TECH AWARD



TOPS Tech Award

- 2.50 GPA

TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: STEADY ACADEMIC PROGRESS

- "Steady Academic Progress" is defined as a 2.00 cumulative GPA.
- Steady Academic Progress must be maintained at the end of any semester or quarter.
  - NOTE: You must have a 2.00 cumulative GPA on ALL hours at the end of each semester/quarter/term. To continue receive your award from one year to the next, you must have the continuation GPA required for your award level.
- Failure to maintain Steady Academic Progress will result in award suspension.

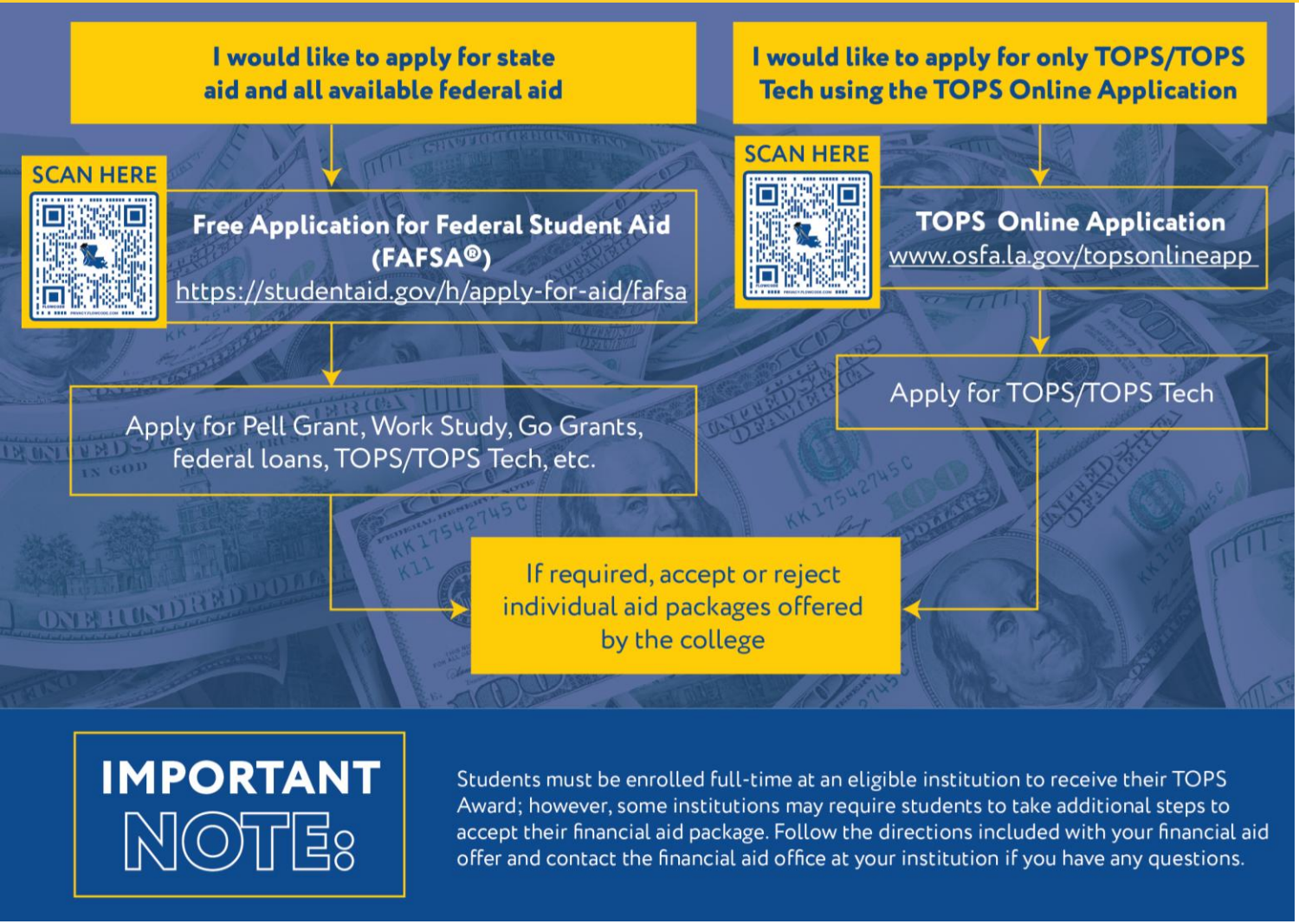
TOPS RETENTION REQUIREMENTS: AWARD REINSTATEMENT

- Students whose awards are suspended for GPA or Steady Academic Progress may be reinstated upon attainment of the required continuation GPA.
- Period of ineligibility may not persist for more than two years for TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Excellence Awards, one year for TOPS Tech Award.

APPLYING FOR TOPS

TOPS ONLINE APPLICATION OR THE FREE APPLICATION FOR FEDERAL STUDENT AID (FAFSA®)

NAVIGATING YOUR OPTIONS: APPLICATIONS



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

Scan here → for additional information

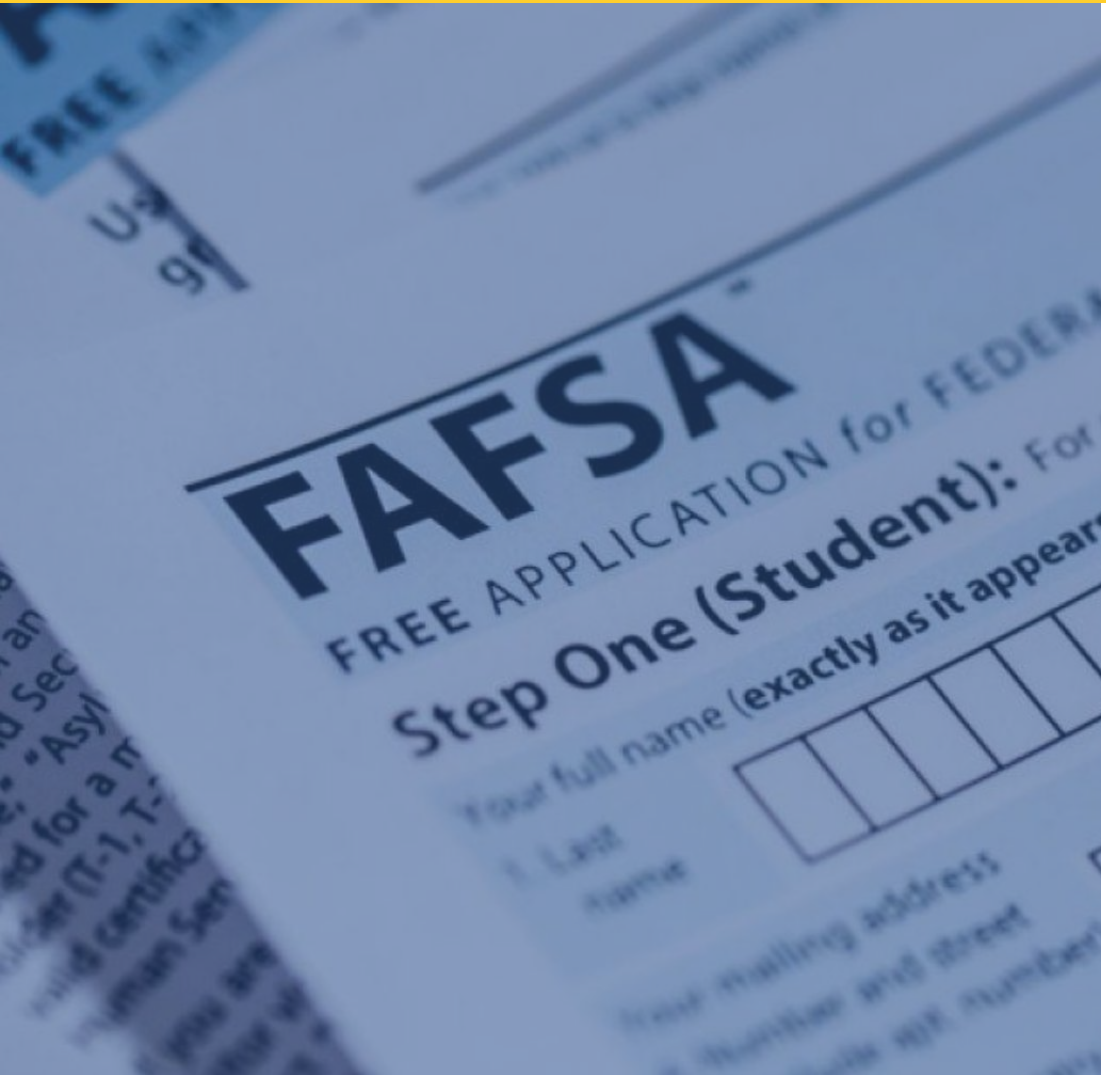
STUDENT: DEMOGRAPHICS

- Social Security Number
- Birthdate
- Full Name
- High School Graduation Date
- Address – Street, City, State, Zip Code
- Student's Phone Number and Type (Home or Mobile)
- Student and Parent Email Addresses
- Louisiana Residency Questions
- Citizenship

STUDENT: DEMOGRAPHICS

- Where student graduated from: high school, home study
- Enrolled Full-time Out of State
- Convicted of Crime Other Than Misdemeanor
- U.S. Armed Forces Service Question
- Certification and Submission of Application

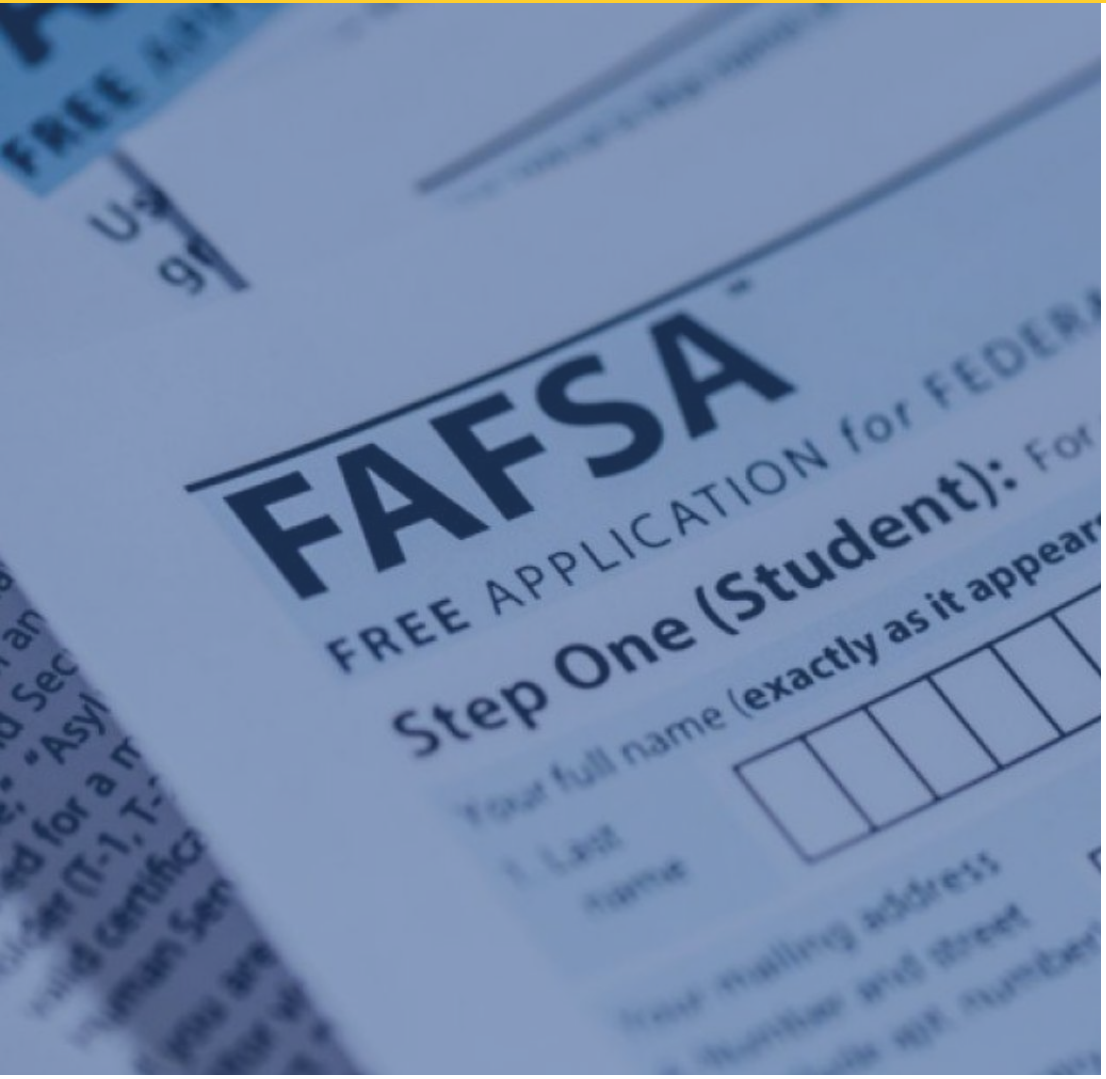
FAFSA®



- 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.

Scan here ⟶
for additional information

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.

FAFSA® FILING METHODS

- FAFSA® On the Web: www.studentaid.gov
  - Faster processing
  - "Skip logic" – students are only asked questions that apply to them
  - Immediate SAI estimate
  - Online receipt verification
  - Live online help

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, 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
July 1, 2030 – June 30, 2031	October 1, 2029 – June 30, 2031	2028

REAL-TIME RESULTS

- Most students now receive their fully processed results immediately, including their Student Aid Index (SAI), federal Pell Grant eligibility information, and any comment or reject.
  - Corrections can be made immediately.

FRAUD SCREENING

- Students are screened for fraud risk in real-time as they complete their FAFSA® form.
  - A small portion of applicants that are flagged for fraud risk will be asked to show a government-issued photo ID.
  - If they cannot show ID, the student will submit the FAFSA® form but must contact the school's financial aid office to verify their identity.

FAMILY FAST PASS

Will allow parents who complete more than one FAFSA® form within the same award cycle to have their information prefilled after their first submission.

TEXT YOUR CONTRIBUTOR

Beginning with the 2027-2028 FAFSA® form, students will have the option to send the contributor invite via text, in addition to the email invitation that is automatically sent.

STUDENT: DEMOGRAPHICS

- Social Security Number
- State of Legal Residence
- Citizenship status
- Interest in Student Loans
- Student Finances
  - Records the student's income, assets, and types of federal benefits received

STUDENT: PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- This section determines your dependency status
- The SAI of a dependent student is based on both your financial information and your parents' financial information
- The SAI of an independent student is based on your (and your spouse's) financial information

STUDENT: PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- To be considered an independent student, you must be able to answer yes to one of the following questions:
  - Were you born before January 1, 2004?
  - As of today, are you married? (Answer "No" if you are separated but not divorced).
  - At the beginning of the 2027-2028 school year, will you be working on a master's or doctorate degree?
  - Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
  - Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?

STUDENT: PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- To be considered an independent student, you must be able to answer yes to one of the following questions:
  - Do you have children or other people (excluding your spouse) who live with you and receive more than half of their support from you now and between July 1, 2027, and June 30, 2028?
  - At any time since you turned age 13, were you an orphan?
  - At any time since you turned age 13, were you a ward of the court?
  - Are you or were you a legally emancipated minor, as determined by a court in your state of residence?
  - Are you or were you in a legal guardianship with someone other than your parent or stepparent, as determined by a court in your state of residence?

STUDENT: PERSONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- To be considered an independent student, you must be able to answer yes to one of the following questions:
  - At any time on or after July 1, 2026, were you unaccompanied and either (1) homeless or (2) self-supporting and at risk of being homeless?*

    *You'll be considered provisionally independent and will be allowed to fill out the FAFSA® form as an independent student if you indicate that you are unaccompanied and homeless or at risk of being homeless on the FAFSA® form for the first time and you don't have a determination from an individual at an eligible agency. An individual at an eligible agency includes one of the following:
    - your high school or district homeless liaison or designee
    - the director or designee of an emergency or transitional shelter, street outreach program, homeless youth drop-in center, or other program serving those experiencing homelessness
    - the director or designee of a project supported by a federal TRIO program or a Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant
    - a financial aid administrator

STUDENT: UNUSUAL CIRCUMSTANCES

- In situations such as the ones below, a student may be able to submit their FAFSA® form without parent information despite being considered a dependent student:
  - The student or the student's parent are incarcerated;
  - Student left home due to an abusive or threatening environment;
  - Student has been abandoned by or estranged from their parents and has not been adopted;
  - Student has been granted refugee or asylee status and are separated from their parents, or their parents are displaced in a foreign country;
  - Student is a victim of human trafficking;
  - Student is otherwise unable to contact or locate their parents and has not been adopted.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

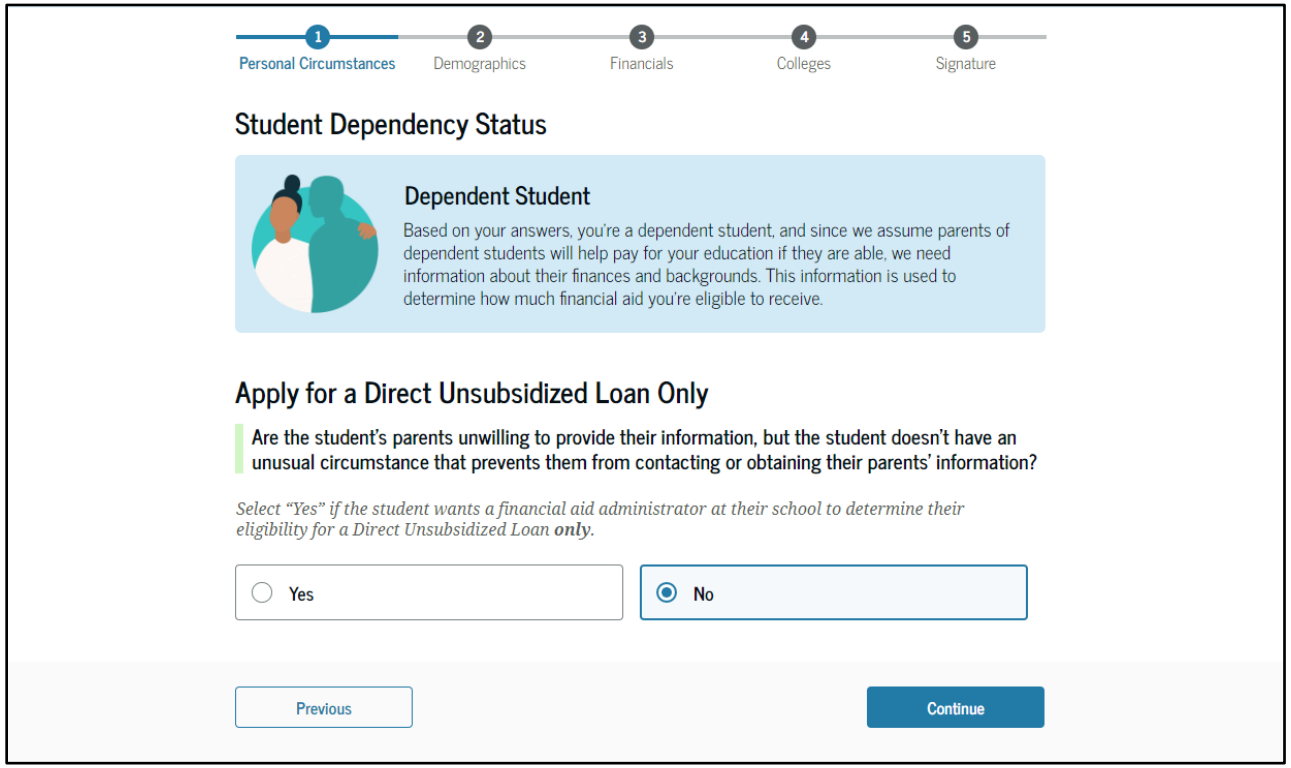
- Beginning with the 2024-25 award year, otherwise dependent students who indicate that they have unusual circumstances that prevent them from providing parent data will no longer receive a rejected application.
  - These students will have their application processed with a provisional independent status.
  - This will generate output documents with a provisional SAI and an estimate of federal student aid eligibility.
  - Aid administrators will need to make a final determination on whether these students should receive a dependency override.
- Students should make an appointment with a financial aid counselor at the institution they plan to attend for guidance.

SELECT COLLEGES

- May select up to 20 institutions to receive FAFSA® data when filing online
  - Make sure to list a Louisiana school first for TOPS purposes.

DIRECT UNSUBSIDIZED LOAN ONLY

- The student is asked if they want a financial aid administrator to determine their eligibility for a Direct Unsubsidized Loan **only** and not for other forms of financial aid.
- Direct Unsubsidized Loans do not require students to demonstrate financial need. Students are responsible for paying the interest that accrues during all periods.
- This is an option if the student's parents are unwilling to provide information. The student selects "No."



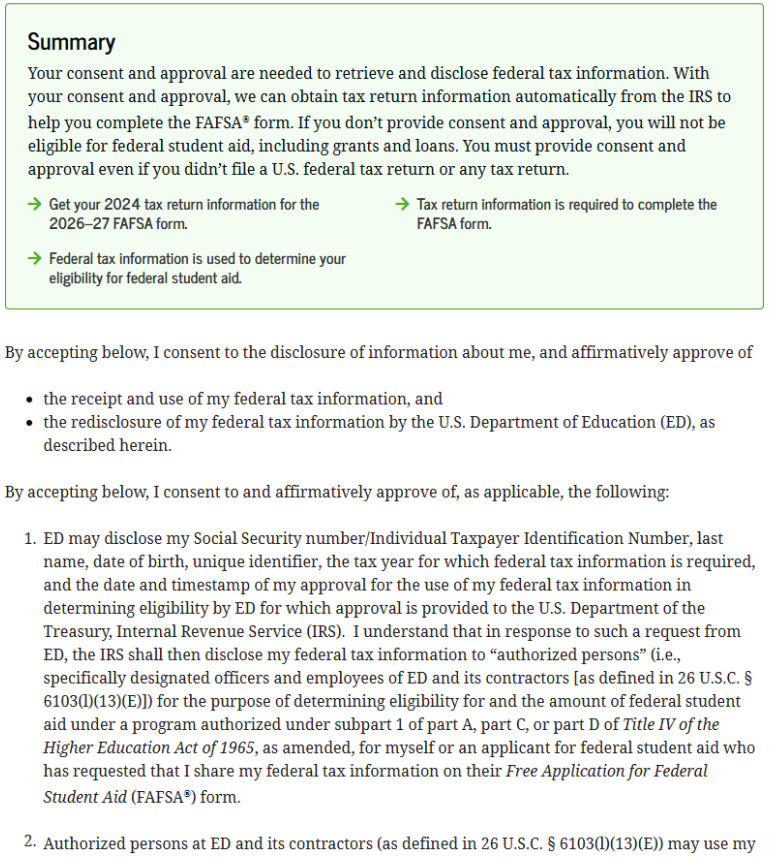
PARENTAL INFORMATION

- Skip if you are an independent student.
- Whose information do you use?
  - "Contributor" is a new term that first appeared on the 2024–25 FAFSA® form.
  - A "contributor" refers to anyone (you, your spouse, your biological or adoptive parent, or your parent's spouse) who's asked to provide their information, consent and approval to have their federal tax information transferred automatically from the IRS into the FAFSA® form (more on that later), and signature on the FAFSA® form.
  - Note: Unless they've legally adopted you, your grandparents, foster parents, legal guardians, siblings, and aunts and uncles aren't considered contributors—even if they help provide for or raise you.

PARENTAL: DEMOGRAPHICS

- You might need the following information:
  - Tax returns
  - Records of child support received
  - Current balances of cash, savings, and checking accounts
  - Net worth of investments, businesses, and farms
- The number of family members in college is no longer a factor in the needs analysis.
- Parent contributor's residency
- Parent contributor's email address
- The definition of family size has changed to align with the number of individuals reported as dependents on the applicant's (if independent) or applicant's parents' (if dependent) U.S. tax return.
  - Applicants may update family size if it changes after filing the tax return.

FEDERAL TAX INFORMATION (FTI)



Summary

Your consent and approval are needed to retrieve and disclose federal tax information. With your consent and approval, we can obtain tax return information automatically from the IRS to help you complete the FAFSA® form. If you don't provide consent and approval, you will not be eligible for federal student aid, including grants and loans. You must provide consent and approval even if you didn't file a U.S. federal tax return or any tax return.

- → Get your 2024 tax return information for the 2026–27 FAFSA form.
- → Tax return information is required to complete the FAFSA form.
- → Federal tax information is used to determine your eligibility for federal student aid.

By accepting below, I consent to the disclosure of information about me, and affirmatively approve of

- the receipt and use of my federal tax information, and
- the redisclosure of my federal tax information by the U.S. Department of Education (ED), as described herein.

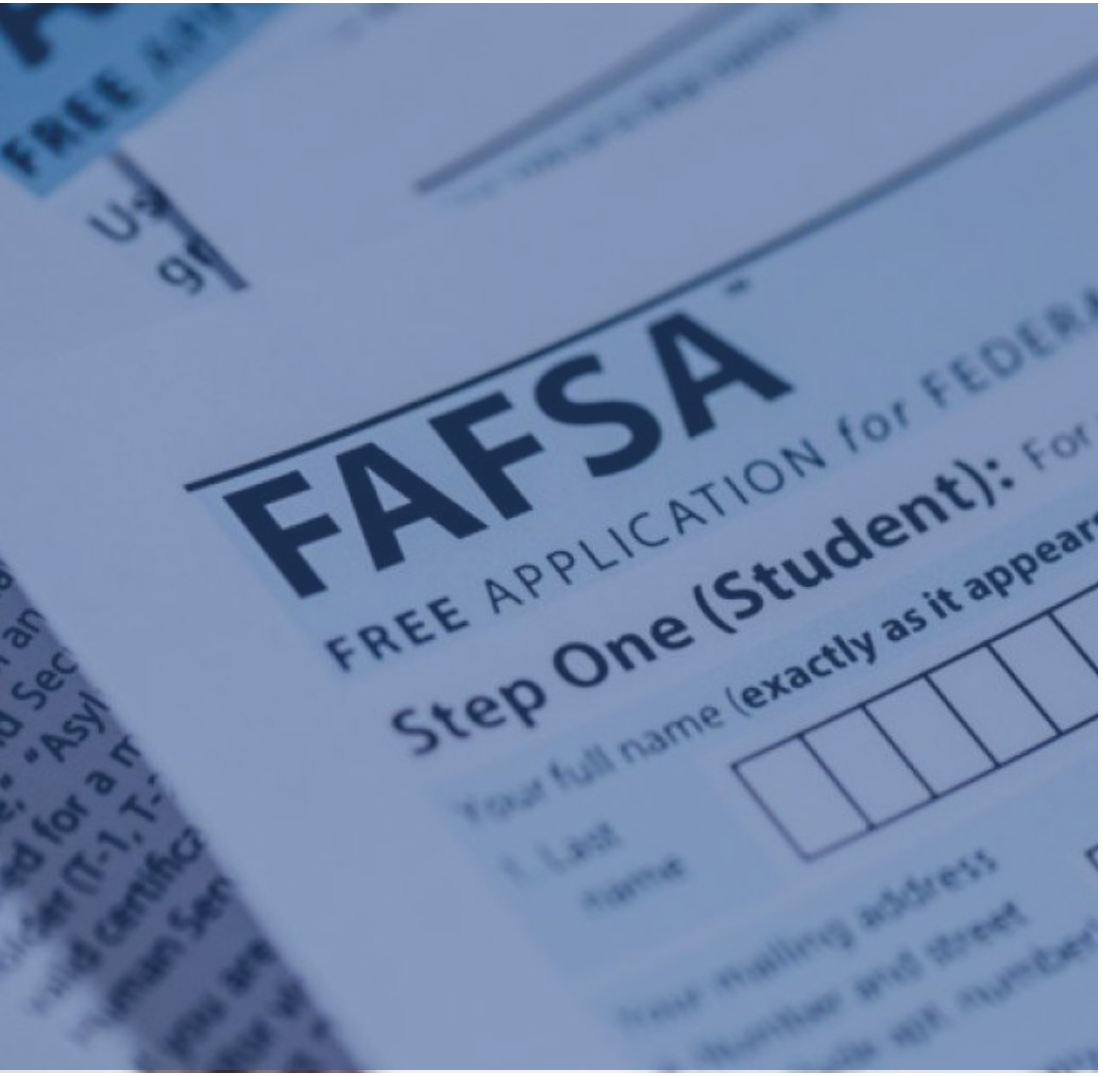
By accepting below, I consent to and affirmatively approve of, as applicable, the following:

1. ED may disclose my Social Security number/Individual Taxpayer Identification Number, last name, date of birth, unique identifier, the tax year for which federal tax information is required, and the date and timestamp of my approval for the use of my federal tax information in determining eligibility by ED for which approval is provided to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service (IRS). I understand that in response to such a request from ED, the IRS shall then disclose my federal tax information to "authorized persons" (i.e., specifically designated officers and employees of ED and its contractors [as defined in 26 U.S.C. § 6103(l)(13)(E)]) for the purpose of determining eligibility for and the amount of federal student aid under a program authorized under subpart 1 of part A, part C, or part D of *Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965*, as amended, for myself or an applicant for federal student aid who has requested that I share my federal tax information on their *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) form.

2. Authorized persons at ED and its contractors (as defined in 26 U.S.C. § 6103(l)(13)(E)) may use my

- All contributors must consent to the use of their Federal Tax Information (FTI) on the FAFSA®.
  - This allows FSA to obtain your federal tax information automatically from the IRS to help you complete the FAFSA® form.
  - An applicant or contributor can enter income and tax data manually on the FAFSA®.
- The student will not be eligible for federal student aid until all required contributors provide consent.

STUDENTAID.GOV ACCOUNT (FSA ID)



- A StudentAid.gov account (FSA ID) allows students and parents to identify themselves electronically to access Federal Student Aid websites.
  - FSA ID two-step verification will be required for everyone.
  - Logging into a FAFSA® using student demographic information will no longer be possible.

DO PARENTS NEED AND FSA ID?

- If you're a dependent student, then your parent will need an FSA ID to sign your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®) form electronically.

IMPORTANT

- You and your parent must have different FSA IDs.
- You must create your own FSA ID—it's your electronic signature, and you need to own it.
- Your parent must create his or her own FSA ID.
- You and your parent should each use your own email address when creating an FSA ID (you can't use/share the same email address).

SIGNATURE PAGE

- For a dependent student, both the student and the parent must sign.
- FAFSA® on the web may be signed using the FSA ID.
  - The parent and student must have separate FSA IDs.
  - Parents may use the same FSA ID for all their children.

FAFSA® SUMMARY PAGE

The FAFSA® Submission Summary provides you with:

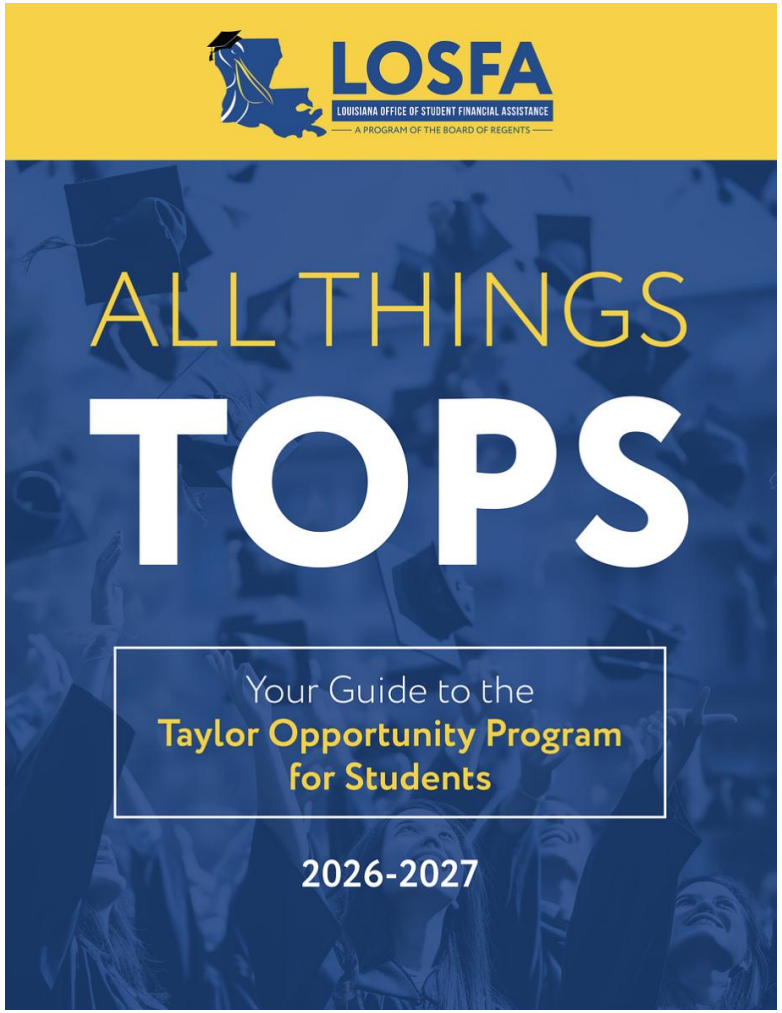
- Student Aid Index (SAI)
- Pell Grant Eligibility
- Listing of institutions which will receive your data
- A financial aid history
- A listing of your responses to the FAFSA®

Corrections may be made:

- Online at www.studentaid.gov
- By phone at (800) 433-3243

RESOURCES

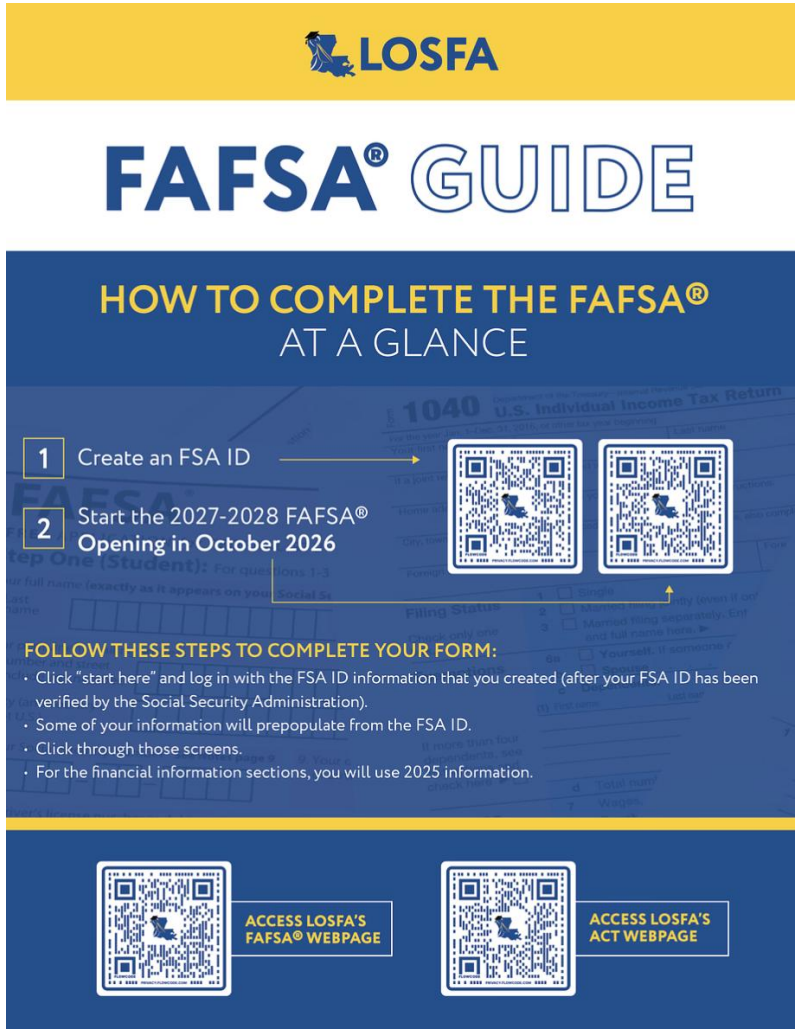
TOPS RESOURCES



FLOWCODE PRIVACY.FLOWCODE.COM

TOPS
WEBPAGE

FAFSA® RESOURCES





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.

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GET CONNECTED WITH LOSFA'S STUDENT NETWORK GROUP



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.

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CONTACT LOSFA

ON THE WEB

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custserv@laregents.edu
GeauxFAFSA@laregents.edu

VIRTUAL OFFICE HOURS

losfa.laregents.edu/voh

Monday – Friday
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

QUESTIONS?

custserv@laregents.edu