

From the Desk of the Executive Director



Dr. Sujuan Boutté

LOSFA's mission is to promote and provide college access...so is there an App for that? There is now!! The mobile version of Louisiana Connect is now live on Apple and Android platforms. College preparation and planning is now literally in the hands of students and we couldn't be more thrilled!

Here's what's even better-not only is the App in the hands of the students, it was designed and tested by the students. Our very own Trailblazer Class of 2012 provided the input regarding the critical features they desired in a college access App. Our Trailblazer Class of 2013 Beta Tested the App and gave their stamp of approval. (See story on page 2 for the details and a glimpse at the App!!)

The entire App process brings us back to the bus once again! The bus drivers in this instance were the students themselves. We wanted to put the technology in the hands of the audience with the highest stake in receiving the information. The LOSFA and ConnectEDU teams occupied their respective seats, working collaboratively to make the students' vision a reality. Our very own Jerri Mack and Gus Wales were the LOSFA team leads on this project. Jerri and Gus were perfect fits for these seats because of their tireless dedication to the Trailblazer initiative and the rapport they build

each year with our peer leaders. Adanna Ukah, our ConnectEDU team lead, was also a perfect fit. Even though Adanna has moved on to a new chapter in her career, we will always remember the quiet, thorough, thoughtful perspective she brought to this project as well as the other Louisiana initiatives she led.

While we are on the subject of putting information directly into the hands of the stakeholders with the highest stake, here's an update on what our LOSFA team has been busy doing on the road. Our Public Information and Communications and Scholarship and Grant Divisions just finished their trek around the state: reaching counselors at the middle and high school levels. The focus this year was on putting tools into the hands of students to enable them to make informed college access decisions starting in middle school and leading up to college and career attainment.

Our Special Programs and Audit Divisions also journeyed to talk with Financial Aid Administrators around the state, providing technical assistance with the implementation of the revised Go Grant Framework for 2013-14. I, too, was able to join the group to provide an update on what's currently happening and

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on the horizon for LOSFA. These types of opportunities are welcomed by the LOSFA team as they allow us the opportunity to connect with our college access partners, provide them with the latest information and gain feedback to help us do our jobs more efficiently and effectively for the good of the students we serve.

Best-
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The Louisiana Connect Mobile App is Now Available

The Louisiana Connect Mobile Application (App) is now available for download and installation from both the Android and Apple stores.

In 2012 LOSFA asked the 150+ Louisiana high school students attending our July Trailblazer camps to identify which Louisiana Connect features they would most like to see in a mobile application. Based on their responses, LOSFA and ConnectEDU went to work developing a Louisiana Connect App for mobile devices.

This past summer, our 2013 Trailblazers beta tested the working version of the App. Their responses were overwhelmingly positive. With the final input from this test group of students, ConnectEDU put the finishing touches on the App which is now available for all Louisiana students in grades 9-12 to download and install.



If the student has an existing Louisiana Connect account, simply enter the user name and password. If the student does not have an active Louisiana Connect account, one can be created and activated using the mobile App.

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The Louisiana Connect Mobile App is Now Available *continued*

Features currently included in the Louisiana Connect App include:

The Communication Center: This is where the newsfeed and other important announcements and updates are posted. It is also where messages from prospective postsecondary school recruiters and potential future employers will appear.

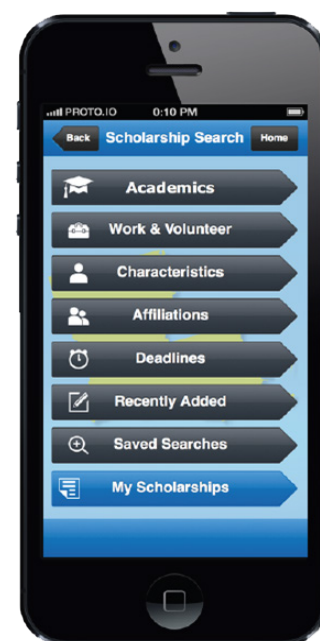
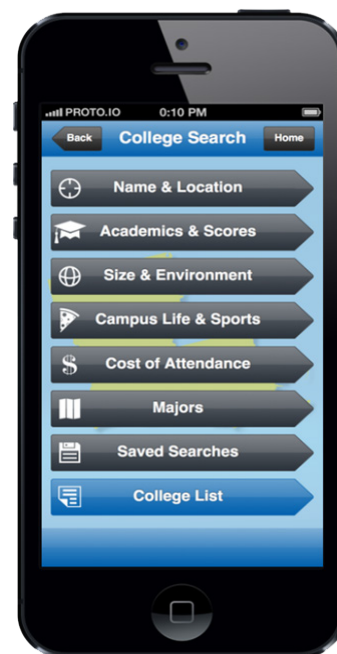
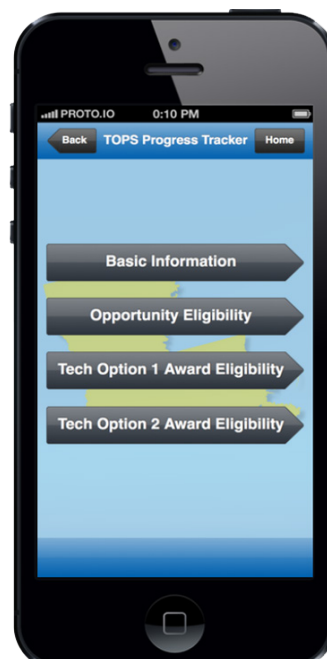
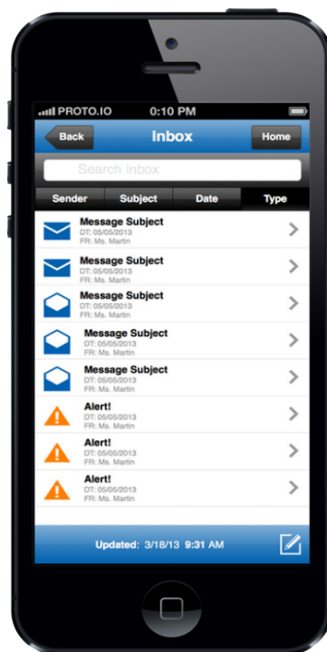
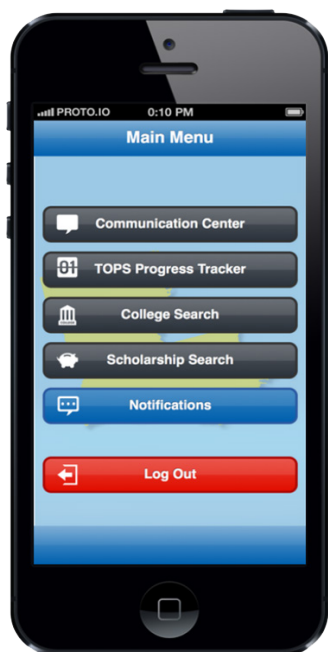
The TOPS Progress Tracker also lists the students' all important TOPS Core Grade Point Average—the only GPA that TOPS eligibility is based upon. It also lists all ACT scores attributed to the student in LOSFA's system. If a score is missing, CALL LOSFA!

The College Search: This feature allows students to compare colleges in and out of state based on location, cost of attendance, school size, environment, campus life, sports, and majors offered. Searches can be saved and updated as often as desired.

The Scholarship Search: The final Louisiana Connect tool that Trailblazers most wanted to be included in the mobile App is the Scholarship Search feature. This allows students to access a plethora of scholarship search engines and to narrow their searches by factors such as academics, work and volunteer experience, personal characteristics, organizational affiliations, and application deadlines. Again, searches can be saved and retrieved at a later date. Scholarships earned can also be saved for future use.

The TOPS Progress Tracker: Think of the TOPS Progress Tracker as an early warning system where students and their parents can track their eligibility toward earning a TOPS scholarship. If information in the Tracker is missing or incorrect, it is a signal to contact LOSFA to identify and correct the problem, long before TOPS award processing is delayed after high school graduation.

An employer profile component is on-track to be added to the App



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The Louisiana Connect Mobile App is Now Available *continued*

with the projected December release of an updated Louisiana Connect mobile application.

The Louisiana Connect mobile app is compatible with iOS Version 6 and higher as well as Android version 4.1 and higher.

Louisiana Connect Parent Access via Mobile Phone Browsers

Parents can support the college and career planning efforts of their student – anytime and anywhere – by simply visiting LouisianaConnect.org via a web browser on their Android or iPhone devices.

1. Open web browser (e.g. Google Chrome, Safari)
2. Type “Louisiana Connect” into Search Bar; alternatively, search for the full URL: <https://www.louisianaconnect.org/>
3. Upon accessing the Website, click “Login” if you already have a Louisiana Connect password, and “Register” if you need to sign up for a new account.
4. Once your username/password have been verified, you will have full access to all Louisiana Connect parent-facing technology, including the College Search, Scholarship Search, Notifications and TOPS Progress Tracker tools that are present in the Louisiana Connect Mobile application.

Here are a few of the comments from students who beta tested the Louisiana Connect mobile App in July:

“I was most impressed with the way that you can view scholarships from every angle of your life. Whether it is gender, race, or what you’re studying, you can get scholarships based on so many things. You can match up your interests to find scholarships and deadlines in the App.”

**-Dominique Moreland
Caddo Parish Magnet High School**

“I thought that it was a very clean, efficient app. I think that it could be helpful for many college-bound students.”

**-Madison Lege
Gueydan High School**

“With the advance of technology today and all of these social media sites, I finally have the app to help me get to college and plan for college. It’s not as stressful anymore.”

**-Joy Antoine
Redemptorist High School**

“I thought that it was very helpful. The searches were very clear. I will definitely download it on my phone and use it.”

**-Anna Katherine Slaughter
Ben’s Ford Christian High School**

“I think that it’s great because no one ever really knows where they are when it comes to TOPS. With the app, you can see exactly what you need to be doing in order to get TOPS, so I think it’s awesome.”

**-London Peterson
Bowling Green High School**



2013 Trailblazers testing the Louisiana Connect Mobile App during the Trailblazer Camp at Northwestern State University.

2013 STS Workshops Scheduled for December

Representatives from LOSFA's Public Information and Communications (PIC) division will conduct workshops for non-public school personnel who use the Student Transcript System (STS). These workshops are open to anyone who uses STS or supervises someone who uses STS, and anyone who would find it useful to know how STS works.

This year's workshops will take place on **Monday, December 2, Tuesday, December 3, Thursday, December 5, and Friday, December 6** at the Louisiana Technology Park in Baton Rouge, located at 7117 Florida Boulevard (in the Bon Carre Mall).

During the four days, there will be six separate workshops with training ranging from beginner to advanced. Below are descriptions of the three different types of workshops as well as a schedule of when each will be held.

Beginners/Intermediate Classes: appropriate for beginners and for intermediate users who want or need a refresher. These are less detailed than the all-day classes, and do not allow time for much practice or for much discussion between groups from different schools.

All-day Classes: appropriate for beginners, for users unsure of their expertise, and for users who are familiar with STS on an everyday basis, but not experienced beyond basics, as well as users who want or need a refresher. Includes practice with one's own school's data.

Advanced Classes: appropriate for intermediate and advanced users. Includes instruction (primarily about non-standard situations), practice, and discussion, with emphasis on solutions one school uses that may be useful to other schools.

Registration will be done online only. The registration URL will be sent to all non-public schools and counselors during the week of November 11. A workbook will be emailed to all registered attendees a few days before the workshops. Attendees should print the workbooks (in color) and bring them to the workshop.

Monday, December 2:

Beginners 8:15 – 12:15

Intermediate/Advanced 12:50 – 4:20

Tuesday, December 3:

Beginners through Advanced – 8:30 – 4:00

Thursday, December 5:

Beginners through Advanced – 8:30 – 4:00

Friday, December 6:

Intermediate/Advanced – 8:15 – 11:35

Beginners – 12:10 – 4:00

Please note that each of these is a stand-alone workshop. While anyone who wants to do so is welcome to attend more than one workshop, beginners, for instance, only need to attend on Monday or Friday, not both.

Please note that the two all day workshops are intended to BE all day – it is not intended that beginners come only for the morning or that advanced users come only for the afternoon.

The two all-day classes will have a one-hour lunch break.

All participants MUST already have a login to STS when they arrive at the workshop. If your login is new, please test it before arriving so that class time is not used for problems with your login.



Public Information and Communications Representative Kate Herke presents at the 2012 STS Training in Baton Rouge.

Professional School Counselor Workshops 2013

LOSFA completed its annual Professional School Counselor Workshops in October.

The workshops were attended by 855 representatives from high schools, middle schools, school districts, universities, and college access programs across the state of Louisiana.

Workshops were held in Alexandria, Baton Rouge, Bossier City, Lafayette, Lake Charles, Mandeville, Monroe and New Orleans.

"We are extremely thankful for the hundreds of dedicated counselors who attend our workshops annually," Gus Wales, Public Information and Communications Director, said. "It is truly a pleasure to work with them throughout the year to help them provide their students with the most accurate and up-to-date college/career access and financial aid information available. The students of Louisiana are fortunate to have such a committed group of counselors in their corner."

Attendees were given a Louisiana Connect update including an overview of the student-centric features



of the portal, a tour of the new public landing pages and a preview of the just released mobile App.

Counselors were also updated on all LOSFA programs, including TOPS, the Louisiana Go Grant and the TOPS Tech Early Start program along with announcement of dates for upcoming LOSFA events and outreach activities.

LOSFA Representatives conducting the workshops included Public Information and Communications (PIC) Division Director Gus Wales, Scholarship and Grant Division Director Deborah Paul, PIC Supervisor Jerri Mack, and PIC Representatives Britt Kelly and Kendra Woods.



LOSFA College Access Challenge Grant Director Nyetta Meaux and LA GEAR UP representative Dianna Frank on the set of WVLA-TV's Louisiana Lagniappe with host Matt Kennedy to promote Louisiana's first College Application Week which is being piloted at 21 Gear Up schools across the state this year.

LOSFA Attends LASFAA Fall Conference

The Scholarship and Grant and Audit Divisions teamed up and provided a presentation to the attendees at the annual LASFAA Fall Conference in Lake Charles on October 23, 2013. Deborah Paul, Scholarship and Grant Director and Erica Hughes, Student Financial Aid Specialist, provided an update on the new Go Grant framework and processing.



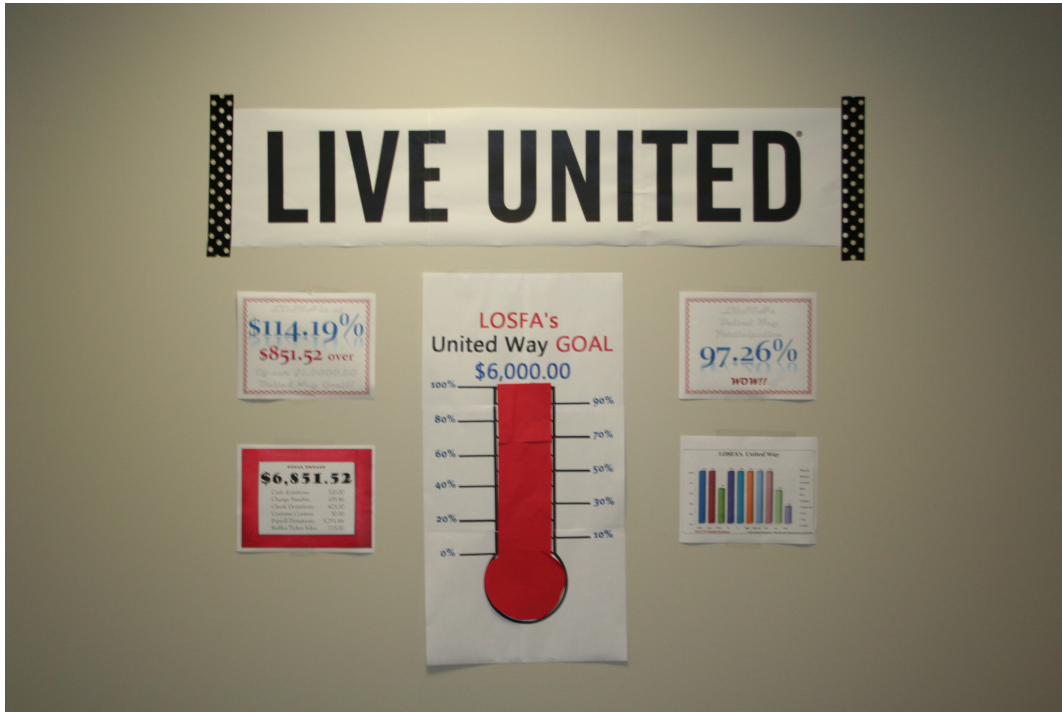
Jerry Oubre, Audit Supervisor, presented information on how to survive an audit and common audit findings seen in TOPS and Go Grant audits.

LOSFA Audit Division Manager Kelvin Deloch provided technical assistance for the session on Decoding Cohort Default Rates and Correcting Data. He also advised

Schools in attendance were able to view statistics relating to Go Grant lifetime funding, the distribution formula used to determine school allocation amounts and award amounts by college systems. Erica provided tips on processing and how to correct errors.

that LOSFA, as the designated Louisiana State Guarantor, is available to assist with Cohort issues and can assist schools with any corrections and/or changes they need to make.

LOSFA Surpasses United Way Campaign Goal

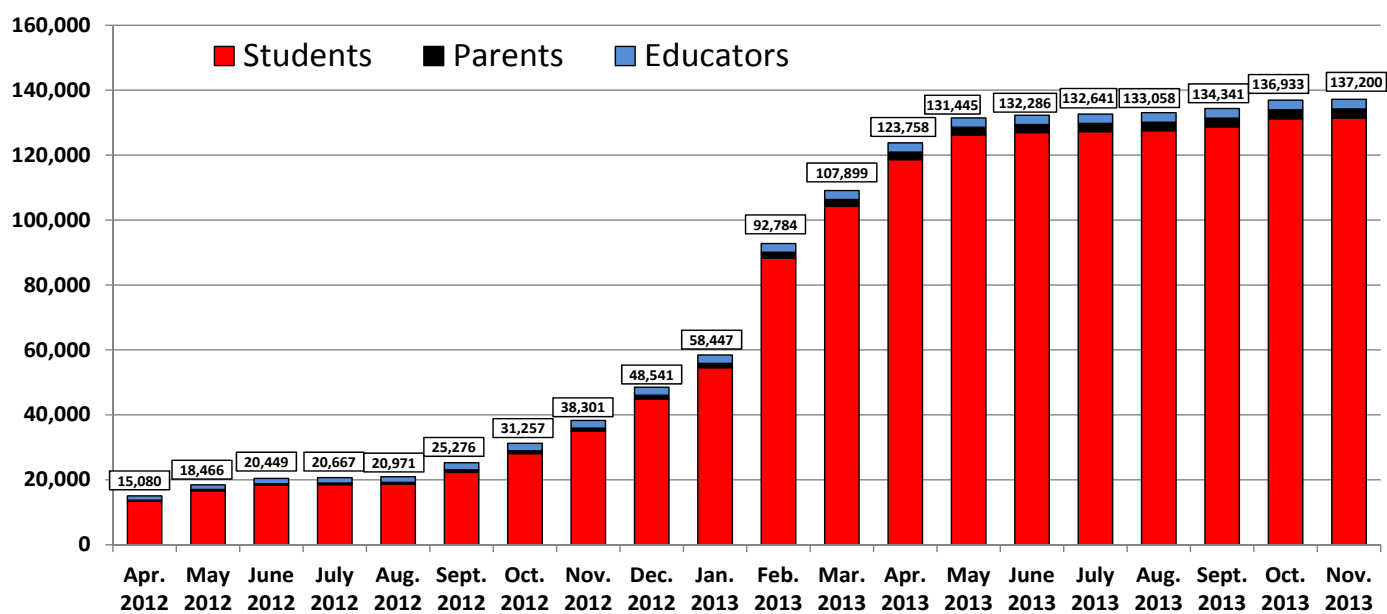


LOSFA surpassed its United Way Goal by \$851.52. The total amount raised was \$6,851.52. Thanks to everyone who contributed to make this a successful campaign.

Thank you to the incredible United Way Committee who helped organize all the fundraising events - Deborah Paul, Devlin Richard, Terri Jameyson, Kristen O'Neil and Nyetta Meaux.



Active Users



The November 2013 data is as of 11/6/2013.

The current total of 137,200 Louisiana Connect users is comprised of 131,439 Students, 2,781 Parents, 1,552 Community Administrators, 536 Professional School Counselors, 876 Teachers, and 16 Scholarship Managers.

LOSFA's Social Media Sites



<http://www.facebook.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.twitter.com/LOSFA>



<http://www.youtube.com/LOSFA1000>



www.Flickr.com/LOSFA



For more information, contact the
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance:

By Phone: 800-259-5626

By E-mail: custserv@la.gov

By Mail: P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202

Web Address: www.osfa.la.gov

For submissions, opinions, or comments for the LOSFA LOOP, please
contact Gus Wales at Gus.Wales@la.gov.