

**LOSFA**

PRESS RELEASE



From the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Deadline approaching for new TOPS applicants to receive funding for 2010-2011 Academic Year

BATON ROUGE – As Louisiana's High School Classes of 2010 prepare for graduation ceremonies in the coming weeks and look toward beginning their postsecondary education in the Fall, they are reminded that in order to receive Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) funding for the 2010-2011 Academic Year, they must apply by July 1, 2010.

"With the whirlwind of activity graduating seniors experience this time of year, it's easy to become distracted," said Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) Executive Director Melanie Amrhein. "But if they plan to begin their postsecondary education this coming Fall and use TOPS funds to do so, the deadline they must keep on their radar is July 1", she added.

Applications received after July 1, 2010, (but before July 2, 2011) will not be eligible for TOPS funding until the subsequent Academic Year, 2011-2012.

There are two methods of applying for TOPS. Louisiana law requires that all applicants who are eligible to receive federal grant aid (Pell Grants) MUST apply by filing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). The FAFSA may be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. By completing the FAFSA, students are considered for a long list of state and federal assistance programs including TOPS, the Louisiana Go Grant, federal Pell Grants, federal Work Study programs and low-interest federal loans. Many institutional scholarship and grant programs also require completion of the FAFSA.

Students who can demonstrate that they are not eligible for federal grant aid (determined by student and parental income), have the option of completing the TOPS Online Application instead. This application is located on the LOSFA website, www.osfa.la.gov and considers the student for TOPS eligibility only. However, in the event of a budget shortfall, students completing the TOPS Online Application instead of the FAFSA will be the first to lose their TOPS award.

2010 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2010, application deadline may still enroll in and attend a postsecondary institution during the 2010-2011 Academic Year at their own expense. If they subsequently apply for TOPS prior to July 2, 2011, and have met the TOPS continuation requirements during their first year of attendance, they will become eligible for a full eight semesters (or twelve quarters) of TOPS funding beginning in the 2011-2012 Academic Year.

Processing of new TOPS applicants does not begin until final grades and graduation have been confirmed through the Louisiana Department of Education and the application and ACT scores are received by LOSFA, but is expected to begin no later than the first week in June.

Students who have questions concerning their TOPS eligibility can check their eligibility status by creating an account on the TOPS Portal at www.osfa.la.gov, or they may contact LOSFA customer service representatives for assistance at 1-800-259-5626, ext. 1012, or 922-1012 (from within the 225 area code only), or via Email at custserv@osfa.la.gov.

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