

## Procedure In the Event of a TOPS Funding Shortfall

The TOPS Statute provides the procedures that must be used to reduce the number of students receiving TOPS awards if the Legislature does not appropriate sufficient funding for TOPS in LSA-R.S. 17:3048.1.N.:

*(1) In the event the legislature appropriates insufficient money to fund all awards made to students qualifying under the provisions of this Section, the number of students to whom awards shall be made shall be reduced as necessary pursuant to a procedure set out by rule adopted by the administering agency. The procedure shall provide for such reduction to be based on the scores on the American College Test and then on the ability of each student's family to pay the student's tuition as evidenced by the expected family contribution determined by using the standardized federal methodology for establishing student financial need. The procedure shall provide that reductions of awards made necessary by insufficient appropriations shall first eliminate the cohort of students who score lowest on the American College Test. The procedures shall provide that within that cohort of students, those whose families are most able to pay the student's tuition shall be eliminated first. After insufficient appropriations require the elimination of all students in such cohort, the procedures shall require repeating the process with those students in the next highest score cohort.*

*(2) Among students denied their awards as provided in this Subsection, those students whose families have the least capacity to pay shall be the first to receive their awards if monies become available. Any student for whom the expected family contribution cannot be determined as provided for in Paragraph (1) of this Subsection shall be denied his award until the legislature appropriates sufficient monies to fund all awards made to students qualifying under the provisions of this Section.*

Rules promulgated by the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission implement the statutory requirements.

*LAC 28:IV.2107 C: Insufficient Funds Appropriated*

*1. All LASFAC administered State Scholarship and Grant Program Awards are contingent upon the annual appropriation of funds by the Louisiana Legislature.*

*2 In the event appropriated funds are insufficient to fully reimburse institutions for awards and stipends for all students determined eligible for the TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors and TECH Awards for a given academic year, then the number of eligible students shall be reduced in accordance with the following procedures until such funds are sufficient.*

*a. Applicants who do not submit financial data on the initial FAFSA or a renewal FAFSA or who do not submit a renewal FAFSA to allow determination of eligibility for federal aid will be the first students eliminated from consideration if insufficient funds are appropriated for the program.*

**This means students who do not have a current FAFSA with their family's financial data on file with the agency will be the first eliminated from payment of their TOPS awards.**

**If the first reduction in the number of students is not sufficient to meet the appropriation shortfall, then:**

*LAC 28:IV.2107 C.2.c.*

*After the elimination of students in §2107.C.2.a, and b, if funds are still insufficient to award all of the remaining students, then those who remain will be prioritized according to their ACT score and, within ACT score, by their EFC in ranges of \$1,000, from lowest to highest. Beginning with the lowest qualifying ACT score, the students with the highest EFC shall be eliminated until the funds available are sufficient to award all remaining students or until all students with that ACT score have been eliminated. This process shall be repeated, beginning with the lowest ACT score and progressing to the highest ACT score, until the projected expenditure for awards equals the funds appropriated for that purpose.*

**This means that students who scored a 17 on the ACT and starting with those with the highest Expected Family Contribution (EFC) would be the next eliminated from payment of their TOPS awards continuing with students with a score of 17 with each lower EFC until the amount appropriated is sufficient to pay the remaining awards. If all of the students with an ACT score of 17 are eliminated, then the process would begin again with the next higher ACT score (18, then 19, then 20, etc.) in the same manner until the amount of the appropriation is sufficient to pay the remaining awards.**

**Note:** LAC 28:IV.2107 C.2.b. is no longer applicable since it pertained only to the 1998-99 award year.