

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE  
COMMISSION  
OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

***Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)  
Bulletin***

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TOPICS:	July 1 Deadline Approaching for TOPS

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As Louisiana's High School Classes of 2009 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 2009-2010 Academic Year, they must apply by July 1, 2009.

"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, 2009, (but before July 2, 2010) will not be eligible for TOPS funding until the subsequent Academic Year, 2010-2011.

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](http://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](http://www.osfa.la.gov) and considers the student for TOPS eligibility only. However, students who choose this option are cautioned that legislation dictates that,

in the event of a budget shortfall, those students who did not file a FAFSA would be the first to be eliminated.

2009 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2009, application deadline may still enroll in and attend a postsecondary institution during the 2009-2010 Academic Year at their own expense. If the award is not paid during the 2009-2010 Academic Year, students who enroll full time during that year must meet all TOPS requirements for continuation of the award. If they subsequently apply for TOPS prior to July 2, 2010, 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 2010-2011 Academic Year.

2009 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2009, application deadline may also opt to delay their enrollment until the beginning of the 2010-2011 Academic Year and still receive their full complement of TOPS eligibility if they apply prior to July 2, 2010.

Eligibility determinations for 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.

Students who have questions concerning their TOPS eligibility can check their eligibility status via the TOPS Portal at [www.osfa.la.gov](http://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](mailto:custserv@osfa.la.gov).