



PRESS RELEASE

From the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Phone Number: 800-259-5626, Ext.1012

E-mail: custserv@osfa.la.gov

Remaining Out-of-State Hurricane Evacuee Students Sought by Louisiana

BATON ROUGE—The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) is seeking current contact information for all students who were enrolled in grades 9-11 in an eligible Louisiana high school on August 29, 2005, who evacuated to another state following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita and subsequently graduated from an out-of-state high school in 2007, or will graduate from an out of state high school in 2008 or 2009.

A bill that would potentially make it possible for these students to return to Louisiana for postsecondary education and allow them to receive the state's Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) merit-based scholarship is currently going through the State Legislature.

As the bill is currently written, students who were enrolled in the 9th, 10th or 11th grade in an eligible Louisiana school at the time of Hurricane Katrina or Hurricane Rita and are considered displaced due to the storms may qualify for a TOPS award based on the alternate residency and academic requirements that were made available to displaced students who graduated from high school in 2006. For more information on who is considered a displaced student and the alternate eligibility requirements, go to the LOSFA website at www.osfa.la.gov/comehome.htm.

Students who meet this description are asked to complete the information form located on the website. Students who are unable to access the Internet should call 1-800-259-5626, ext. 1012 for further instructions.

In addition to completing the information form on the LOSFA website, potentially affected students who graduated from an out-of-state high school in 2007 or will graduate from an out-of-state high school in 2008 are urged to file the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) by July 1, 2008. The FAFSA is used by Louisiana as an application for the TOPS scholarship. July 1, 2008, is the Louisiana FAFSA completion deadline for students seeking funding from TOPS for the 2008-2009 academic year. The FAFSA can be completed online at www.fafsa.ed.gov.

"While final approval of this bill (Louisiana HB 1075) may not come until late June or early July, we want to begin making contact with these students now so that we can quickly determine their eligibility should the bill receive the necessary legislative and executive approval," said LOSFA Executive Director Melanie Amrhein.

Students and their families should be aware that this bill has not yet been approved by the Louisiana Legislature, nor signed by the Governor and there is no guarantee that either will happen.