



Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA)
A program of The Board of Regents



Welcome!

LOSFA Professional School Counselor Webinar 2017

LOSFA's Vision is to be Louisiana's First Choice for College Access



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LOSFA Administered Programs

TOPS

START Saving Program

- Louisiana's 529 college savings program

TOPS Tech Early Start Program

Go Grant

Rockefeller State Wildlife Scholarship

Chafee Educational Training Voucher (ETV)
Program

John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment Program

LA ABLE – Louisiana's 529A Saving Plan for
Persons with Disabilities

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LOSFA Social Media Sites



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



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



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



<http://instagram.com/losfa001>

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Legislative Update

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TOPS

- Funding for TOPS is contingent upon appropriation.

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- **Act 18** of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature sets a floor for the TOPS Award Amount beginning with the fall semester of 2016 and provides that the qualifying ACT score shall be truncated to a whole number rather than rounded to the next whole number. **This change is effective beginning with the fall semester of 2016.**



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- **Act 388** of the 2016 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature increases the grade point average (GPA) requirement to qualify for a TOPS Performance Award from 3.0 to 3.25 and increases the GPA requirement to qualify for a TOPS Honors Award from 3.0 to 3.50. **This change is effective for high school graduates of 2021 and later.**



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- **FROM ACT 359 of the 2013 Legislature**
- Beginning with the high school graduating class of 2018, certain honors, advancement placement, gifted, and dual enrollment courses approved by BESE and the Board of Regents will be graded on a 5.0 grading scale for purposes of calculating students' grade point average on the TOPS core curriculum courses.
- AP Physics I and AP Physics II

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- **FROM ACT 230 of the 2015 Legislature** provides that 2017 high school graduates will be able to use the TOPS Tech Award to pursue an associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education programs, including skill, occupational, vocational, technical, certificate, and academic, that the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) and the Board of Regents (BOR) determine are aligned to state workforce priorities.

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Recently Approved Equivalent (Substitute) Core Courses for the TOPS Opportunity, Performance and Honors Core Curriculum

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Core Curriculum Course(s)	Recently Approved Equivalent (Substitute) Course(s)
Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II	Integrated Mathematics I, II and III
Art	Media Arts I - IV; Photography I, Photography II, and Digital Photography
Algebra III; Advanced Math - Functions and Statistics, Advanced Math - Pre-Calculus, Pre-Calculus, or Math Methods I IB (Mathematical Studies SL); Calculus, AP Calculus AB, or Math Methods II IB (Mathematics SL); AP Calculus BC; Probability and Statistics or AP Statistics; IB Further Mathematics HL; IB Mathematics HL	AP Computer Science A

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Core Curriculum Course(s)	Recently Approved Equivalent (Substitute) Course(s)
Biology II	Human Anatomy and Physiology
Western Civilization, European History, or AP European History; World Geography, AP Human Geography, or IB Geography; World History, AP World History, or IB World History; History of Religion; IB Economics, Economics, AP Macroeconomics, or AP Microeconomics	AP Psychology
Foreign Language	Mandarin Chinese I-IV Hindi I – IV Portuguese I-IV Vietnamese I-IV

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- A Consent Form for every public school student is required by law to ensure that PII is disclosed only for those students whose parent or legal guardian has consented and that the parents who deny consent do so with full knowledge of the effect of denial of consent.
- If you filled out a consent form during a previous school year, the form will be good through the end of high school unless consent is revoked.
- The Consent Form must be signed by the student rather than the parent or legal guardian if the student is 18 or is judicially emancipated or is emancipated by marriage.



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Schedule a LOSFA Visit!

- LOSFA Representatives are available at no cost for daytime and evening seminars/workshops and college fairs
- Seminars Available
 - TOPS or TOPS/FASFA
 - START
 - General Financial Aid Overview
 - FLY: Financial Literacy for You
 - TOPS Retention
 - College Application Workshops
 - FAFSA Completion Workshops
 - FSA ID Completion Workshop

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- Email or fax Sabrina Johnson or Breanna Paul as early as possible to schedule your event
 - Sabrina.Johnson2@la.gov
 - Breanna.Paul@la.gov
 - Fax: (225) 208-1597
- Requests must be received at least 30 days prior to the date of the event
- Scheduling a college fair with LACRAO does not include LOSFA. Feel free to invite LOSFA to your LACRAO event.



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Tips To Make Sure Your TOPS Processing Goes Smoothly

- Write your name exactly the SAME on ALL documents. If your name is John Alan Smith, Jr., do not fill out one application as John A. Smith, Jr., another as J.A. Smith, Jr., or John Alan Smith. Spelling and punctuation matter. Your date of birth and address must also be the same on all documents, applications, etc.

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Tips To Make Sure Your TOPS Processing Goes Smoothly

- Include the ACT TOPS code of 1595 or the SAT TOPS code of 9019 on all ACT/SAT test registrations. Make sure that the Email address you put on your ACT registration and test matches the Email address you use on the FAFSA.
- Public School students: make certain that your school has a parent-signed Consent Form granting LOSFA access to grade data.

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Tips To Make Sure Your TOPS Processing Goes Smoothly

- Make sure you are taking the 19 units that comprise the TOPS Core Curriculum.
- Be aware that TOPS awards are based on TOPS Core GPA...not overall GPA...and GPA cannot be rounded up or down.
- Both the parent and the student must apply for and receive an FSA ID to electronically sign the FAFSA.

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Tips To Make Sure Your TOPS Processing Goes Smoothly

- FAFSA is the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and is the primary TOPS application. The 2017-2018 FAFSA will be available beginning October 1, 2017, at www.fafsa.gov and will use 2016 Federal Income Tax information. The earlier the FAFSA is filed, the earlier we can begin matching the needed information for TOPS eligibility determination.

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Tips To Make Sure Your TOPS Processing Goes Smoothly

- Apply for Fall 2018 admission to the postsecondary institution of your choice during October 2017.
- “Like” LOSFA on Facebook and/or “Follow” LOSFA on Twitter for important TOPS information throughout the year.

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Tips To Make Sure Your TOPS Processing Goes Smoothly

- Create a LOSFA Student Hub account to follow your progress toward earning a TOPS award and then to track your TOPS continuation eligibility throughout postsecondary studies. Public school students will initially log in with their Louisiana State Secure ID, non-public students with their State Identification Number.

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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

- Please do not tell students at graduation that they have earned a TOPS Award. Doing so gives the student and parents a false sense of security, thus they don't discover that there is a problem that will take time to correct until fee bill deadlines are upon them.



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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

The following is from the TOPS Q&A on the LOSFA website:

- **Q-151. As a high school guidance counselor, what terminology should I use to recognize a potential TOPS recipient at graduation?**
- **A. It is inappropriate for the high school to state that a student is eligible for or has been awarded TOPS.** The high school electronically forwards the student's academic transcript through the Local Education Agency via the Student Transcript System (STS) to the Louisiana Department of Education, which will determine each student's compliance with the TOPS core curriculum requirements and compute the student's highest TOPS Cumulative High School Grade Point Average. LOSFA will determine the student's eligibility after graduation. Eligibility is also based on official ACT/SAT scores, timely receipt of application, compliance with the requirement to apply for federal grant aid and information relating to the student's citizenship, residency and criminal record.

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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

If the high school elects to notify students of their tentative TOPS eligibility based upon data available to the school, the high school must make the following disclaimer:

“Although it appears that you have satisfied the academic requirements for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Award based on this school’s review of the TOPS core curriculum courses you have completed and calculation of your TOPS Core High School Grade Point Average, you must meet all of the following conditions to redeem a scholarship under this program:

1. The Louisiana Board of Regents (LOSFA) must determine that you have in fact completed the TOPS core curriculum courses;
2. LOSFA must determine that your TOPS Cumulative High School Grade Point Average based on the TOPS core curriculum meets the statutory requirements;

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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

3. You must be a Louisiana resident as defined by statute;
4. You must be accepted for enrollment by an eligible Louisiana postsecondary institution and be registered as a full-time undergraduate student no later than the next semester following the first anniversary of your graduation from high school;
5. You must apply for federal grant aid, if you are eligible for such aid, by the deadline required for consideration for state aid; and
6. You must have met all academic and nonacademic requirements and be officially notified of your award by LOSFA.”

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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

Q-152. I was notified at graduation that I have TOPS. Now, my college has no record of that award. What is going on?

A. While some high schools honor their graduates by naming those who are expected to qualify for a TOPS award, the only official notice that you have qualified for a TOPS scholarship is the notice of your TOPS eligibility from the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA).



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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

- Caution your students that just because they see an “anticipated” TOPS amount included on their initial fee bill and/or university account, that again does not mean that they have been found eligible by LOSFA for a TOPS award.
- Be certain that the consent “flag” is turned “on” in STS for students for whom you have a parental consent form on file. Failure to do so will prevent LOSFA from being able to determine TOPS eligibility.
- Public Schools: Be certain that your site is certified when you submit data to STS. Site must be recertified each time corrections are made.
- Be certain that the grad date field is populated before you submit records to STS.

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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

- Make sure that your students know that their last opportunity to receive a qualifying ACT score is the June national test date immediately following their May graduation.
- DO NOT ENTER ALL ZEROS IN LIEU OF A SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER. LDOE's eScholar program which converts SSN's to State Secure ID numbers cannot process a Social with all zeroes and LOSFA will not receive their transcript from STS until this is corrected.

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TOP TEN TOPS TIPS FOR COUNSELORS

- Make certain that your students and parents are aware of the LOSFA website (www.osfa.la.gov) and the wealth of information contained therein. Make sure that students are also aware of our college match and fit website, www.unlockmyfuture.org. Encourage students and parents to “like” LOSFA on Facebook and to “follow” LOSFA on Twitter.
- Encourage your seniors to request LOSFA text messages. Instructions on how to sign up are posted on the LOSFA website.
- Encourage your students to create a LOSFA Student Hub account.

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What is LCAAM?

- **Louisiana College Application and Access Month (LCAAM)**
- The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), along with key education stakeholders in the State of Louisiana, have collaborated to develop and implement Louisiana College Application and Access Month during the month of October. **LCAAM was developed to assist 12th grade students with navigating the complex college admissions process and to ensure that they apply to at least one postsecondary institution of interest.** Schools have the opportunity to invite families to attend and to take advantage of completing and submitting college applications with their students. LCAAM events may include college applications, FSA ID registrations, FAFSA Completions, career searches, employment applications, military searches and military applications.

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When is LCAAM?

- The Louisiana College Application & Access Month is scheduled for the month of October.
- However, some schools, depending on their schedule, choose to schedule their college application month event outside of this timeframe. This is okay. Our agency asks that you still submit a registration form to us with the date/time of your event, so that we can do the best we can get a staff member assigned to your event and assist with any help that you may need.
- **LOSFA does not schedule your school's event.** You tell us the date/time of your event and we do our best to get one of our staff members to attend it.

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Early FAFSA Completion

Incorporate Early FAFSA Completion (beginning October 1) into your LCAAM events.

Split Event:

Daytime: Student completes college applications and student section of the FAFSA

Evening: Parent completes their section of the FAFSA

Evening Event: The student and parent complete the FAFSA and college applications at the same time.

If having your LCAAM event and FAFSA completion on the same day isn't possible due to scheduling, **FAFSA completion information and materials can be provided to the students to bring home to their parents.**

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What Will My Event Look Like?

- Your high school event is tailored for what fits your school.
- **Size:** Your event can have 20 seniors participating or 400+ participating.
- **Time:** You can choose to have an all-day event, a morning or afternoon event, or a lunchtime event.
- **Location:** LCAAM events usually take place in a computer lab, library, auditorium, etc.
- **Some of the basics that you will need: (See Site Coordinator Checklist in ACAC Manual for more...)**
 - Computer/Internet Access
 - Desks/Tables & Chairs
 - Sign-In Sheets
 - Volunteers/Staff (that will assist students with the application process)

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UnlockMyFuture.org



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November 5, 2017

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FLY Tour

FLY

financial literacy for you

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College Acceptance Day

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FAFSA

Free Application for Federal Student Aid

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FAFSA

- **The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) is the application for both federal and state aid programs.**
 - Be sure to fill out the FAFSA even if you don't think you'll qualify for need based aid.
- **The FAFSA is the only application needed for the TOPS scholarship.**
- **You should never be asked to pay to fill out the FAFSA. It is a FREE application.**

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FAFSA

- The only financial aid directly determined from the FAFSA data is eligibility for the federal Pell Grant
- The primary purpose of the FAFSA is to establish the student's Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
 - The EFC is used by the institution, in a process called packaging, to determine your eligibility for campus based aid programs including FSEOG, Go Grant, Federal Work Study, Perkins Loans and William D. Ford Direct Loans

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FAFSA Filing Methods

- FAFSA On the Web: ***www.fafsa.gov***
 - Faster processing
 - “Skip logic” – students are only asked questions which apply to them
 - Immediate EFC estimate
 - Online receipt verification
 - Live online help
- Paper Application
 - Available by calling the Federal Student Aid Information Center at 800-433-3243 or downloading from ***www.fafsa.gov***

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FAFSA Submission Dates

When a Student Is Attending College (School Year)	When a Student Can Submit a FAFSA	Which Year's Income Information Is Required?
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018	October 1, 2016–June 30, 2018	2015
July 1, 2018 – June 30, 2019	October 1, 2017–June 30, 2019	2016
July 1, 2019 – June 30, 2020	October 1, 2018–June 30, 2020	2017
July 1, 2020 – June 30, 2021	October 1, 2019 – June 30, 2021	2018

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FAFSA: Student Information

- Social Security Number
- State of Legal Residence
- Citizenship status
- Interest in Student Loans and Work-Study programs

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FAFSA: Student Finances

- Records the student's income, assets, and types of federal benefits received

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FAFSA: Student Status

- This section determines your dependency status
- The EFC of a dependent student is based on both your financial information and your parents' financial information
- The EFC of an independent student is based on your (and your spouse's) financial information

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FAFSA: Student Status

- To be considered an independent student, you must be able to answer yes to one of the following questions:
 - Were you born before January 1, 1995?
 - As of today, are you married?
 - At the beginning of the 2018-2019 school year, will you be working on a masters or doctorate program?
 - Are you currently serving on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces for purposes other than training?
 - Are you a veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces?

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FAFSA: Student Status

- Do you have children who will receive more than half of their support from you between July 1, 2018 and June 30, 2019?
- Do you have dependents (other than your spouse/child) who will live with you and receive more than half of their support from you now and through June 30, 2019?
- At any time since you turned age 13, were both of your parents deceased, were you in foster care, or were you a dependent or ward of the court?

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FAFSA: Student Status Special Circumstances

- Are you or were you an emancipated minor as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
- Are you or were you in legal guardianship as determined by a court in your state of legal residence?
- At any time on or after July 1, 2016, were you determined by certain governmental agencies to be an unaccompanied youth who was homeless?

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FAFSA: Parental Information

- Skip if you are an independent student
- Whose information do you use?
 - Grandparents, foster parents and legal guardians are not considered parents
 - If your parents are divorced or separated, answer the questions about the parent you lived with most during the past 12 months
 - If this parent is remarried as of today, answer the questions about that parent and their spouse

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FAFSA: Parental Information

- If your parent is single or widowed, answer the questions about that parent
 - If your widowed parent is remarried, answer the questions about that parent and their spouse

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FAFSA: Parental Information

- Records parental income, assets, and type of federal benefits received
- Number of household in college
 - Does not include parents
- Parental residency
- Parents' e-mail address

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FAFSA: School Information

- May list up to 10 institutions to receive FAFSA data when filing online
 - Make sure to list a Louisiana school first for TOPS purposes
- Housing plan
- Enrollment status

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FAFSA: Signatures

- For a dependent student, both the student and the parent must sign
- FAFSA on the Web may be signed by:
 - Using the FSA ID
 - The parent and student must have separate FSA ID
 - Parents may use the same FSA ID for all of their children
 - Printing the signature page
 - Must mail within 14 days

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Student Aid Report (SAR)

- The SAR provides you with:
 - Expected Family Contribution (EFC)
 - Pell Grant Eligibility
 - Listing of Institutions which will receive your data
 - A financial aid history
 - A listing of your responses to the FAFSA
- Corrections may be made:
 - Online at ***www.fafsa.gov***
 - By phone at (800) 433-3243

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Contact LOSFA
www.osfa.la.gov
custserv@la.gov

800-259-5626
(225) 219-1012

8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Monday - Friday

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