

LOUISIANA'S TUITION OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS, "TOPS"

September 2007

For more information, call the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) at (800) 259-5626, Ext. 1012 or visit our Web site at www.osfa.la.gov.

STANDARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ¹	AWARD COMPONENTS OF TOPS (EXCEPT TECH AWARDS)		
	OPPORTUNITY AWARD	PERFORMANCE AWARD	HONORS AWARD
High School Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.50 (GPA computed on core courses only)	3.00 (GPA computed on core courses only)	3.00 (GPA computed on core courses only)
Core Units	17.5 ²	17.5 ²	17.5 ²
ACT Composite Score (or SAT Equivalent)	Prior year state average; Currently 20 ³	23 ³	27 ³
Must Enroll Full Time	As a first-time freshman, by the first semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation ^{4, 5, 6, 7}	As a first-time freshman, by the first semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation ^{4, 5, 6, 7}	As a first-time freshman, by the first semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation ^{4, 5, 6, 7}
Eligible Institutions	Louisiana public & LAICU postsecondary institutions ⁸	Louisiana public & LAICU postsecondary institutions ⁸	Louisiana public & LAICU postsecondary institutions ⁸
Maximum Award at Public Schools	Tuition & certain fees ⁹	Tuition & certain fees, plus \$400 per year ⁹	Tuition & certain fees, plus \$800 per year ⁹
Maximum Award at LAICU ⁸ Institutions	Weighted average tuition of public-degree granting schools ⁹	Weighted average tuition of public-degree granting schools, plus \$400 ⁹	Weighted average tuition of public-degree granting schools, plus \$800 ⁹
BESE-APPROVED HOME-STUDY ELIGIBILITY ¹⁰	Currently an ACT of 22 (2 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA) ¹⁰	ACT of 24 (1 point above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA) ¹⁰	ACT of 28 (1 point above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA) ¹⁰
OUT-OF-STATE STUDENT ELIGIBILITY ¹¹	Currently an ACT of 23 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA) ¹¹	ACT of 26 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA) ¹¹	ACT of 30 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA) ¹¹
RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS ¹²	OPPORTUNITY AWARD ¹²	PERFORMANCE AWARD ¹²	HONORS AWARD ¹²
Maintain Academic Progress (Cumulative GPA)	2.30 end of first academic year 2.50 end of all other academic years Maintain steady academic progress end of all other terms (2.00 cumulative GPA)	3.00 end of each academic year ¹³ Maintain steady academic progress end of all other terms (2.00 cumulative GPA)	3.00 end of each academic year ¹³ Maintain steady academic progress end of all other terms (2.00 cumulative GPA)
Hours Earned per Academic Year	Enroll full time and maintain continuous enrollment each semester, earn 24 hours or more each academic year ⁶	Enroll full time and maintain continuous enrollment each semester, earn 24 hours or more each academic year ⁶	Enroll full time and maintain continuous enrollment each semester, earn 24 hours or more each academic year ⁶
Award Reinstated Upon Recovery of Required GPA	Yes ^{12, 14}	Yes, but reinstated as an Opportunity Award ^{12, 13, 14}	Yes, but reinstated as an Opportunity Award ^{12, 13, 14}
Award Limits	4 years or 8 semesters ^{15, 16}	4 years or 8 semesters ^{15, 16}	4 years or 8 semesters ^{15, 16}

1 - Applicable to students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship and who graduate from Louisiana public or approved non-public high schools, and who are the dependent of a parent(s) or a court ordered custodian who is a resident of Louisiana for at least two years prior to the month of the dependent's high school graduation; or a dependent of a member of the Armed Forces who claims Louisiana as his legal residence and has filed Louisiana tax returns or who is stationed in Louisiana and completes a DD Form 2058 to become a legal resident within 180 days of reporting to Louisiana; or is an independent student who has been a resident for at least two years prior to the month of his or her high school graduation; or is a dependent or independent student who actually resides in Louisiana while attending a Louisiana public or approved non-public high school for the period of his or her last two full years of high school culminating in graduation as certified by the high school.

2 - Core units may NOT be waived if not offered at the high school attended. It is the student's responsibility to acquire any such course(s) through approved correspondence or distance learning venues. Individual courses may be waived for students with exceptionalities or disabilities that prevent enrollment or successful completion.

3 - A qualifying score must be achieved on a National, International or Special ACT or equivalent Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) no later than April 30 in the year of high school graduation. Awards may be reduced if tested after this date. Scores acquired on tests taken after June of the graduating year will not be considered. For an ACT or SAT score to be considered, the student must enter code 1595 on the ACT registration form or code 9019 on the SAT registration form.

4 - A qualified student who enlists in the Armed Forces within one year of graduation from high school must enroll in an eligible college within five years of the date of graduation or within one year of separation from active duty, whichever is earlier. The veteran must not have been discharged with an undesirable, bad conduct or dishonorable discharge. A student who meets these requirements and did not previously apply, must file a FAFSA within one year of separation from active duty.

5 - Students qualifying for more than one award shall receive the highest award.

6 - Exceptions for "first-time freshman" and/or "continuous full-time enrollment" may be granted for justifiable cause. Contact LOSFA for an application.

7 - Students who met the academic requirements for a TOPS award but enrolled as a first-time freshman at an out-of-state college, may apply for TOPS by submitting the TOPS Supplemental Data Form no later than July 1st immediately following the academic year during which the student first enrolled as a full-time student in an eligible Louisiana school. While enrolled out-of-state, such students must have met the renewal requirements for TOPS. A student who meets these requirements and did not previously apply for TOPS must also submit a FAFSA or TOPS On-line Application by July 1st.

8 - LAICU schools are those institutions that are members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

9 - Tuition varies from institution to institution. Your institution may include fees in your tuition that are not covered by TOPS.

10 - Applicable to students who complete a La. Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved home-study program at the twelfth grade level and who meet the residency requirements (See Note 1).

11 - Applicable to students who graduate from an approved out-of-state high school and who meet the residency requirements (See Note 1). Students who graduate from an approved high school located outside of the United States may also qualify for a TOPS Opportunity Award with an ACT score of 23 or higher, provided a parent(s) of the dependent student was actively engaged in work or other activity on behalf of a Louisiana employer or sponsor and actually lived in Louisiana for at least the 24-months preceding the date the work or activity outside the United States began, and must have remained a Louisiana resident through the date of the student's graduation from high school.

12 - Unless the recipient of an award is ineligible for federal grant aid, a FAFSA must be filed annually to be received by the state deadline of July 1.

13 - Students who fail to maintain a 3.00 GPA shall revert to the Opportunity Award, provided the minimum GPA for that award has been maintained.

14 - Provided that the period of ineligibility did not extend for more than two years

15 - Recipients may pursue academic degrees or technical diplomas or both, but may not exceed the award limit.

16 - Any student who successfully completes an academic undergraduate degree in less than the eight semesters of eligibility may qualify to receive any remaining award benefits provided the student enrolls in a postgraduate academic program at an eligible institution and continues to meet all academic and other requirements for continuation of the award.

WHAT IS TOPS?

Louisiana's Tuition Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) is a comprehensive program of state scholarships and one of the most innovative and progressive student assistance programs in the nation. TOPS has five award components. See the table on the reverse for eligibility and renewal requirements of each award, except the Tech and Tech Early Start awards, which are presented in separate brochures.

TOPS CORE CURRICULUM

UNITS	COURSES*
4	English I, II, III and IV
1	Algebra I (one unit) or Applied Algebra IA and IB (two units)
1	Algebra II
1	Geometry, Calculus or an approved advanced math substitute
1	Biology
1	Chemistry
1	Earth Science, Environmental Science, Physical Science, Biology II, Chemistry II, Physics, Physics II, or Physics for Technology (one unit) or Agriscience I AND Agriscience II (two units)
1	American History
1	World History, Western Civilization or World Geography
1	Civics and Free Enterprise (one unit combined) or Civics (one unit)
1	Fine Arts Survey (or substitute two units of performance courses in music, dance and/or theater; or two units of visual art; or two units of studio art; or one unit of an elective from among the other subjects listed in this core curriculum)
2	Foreign Language (two units in the same language)
1/2	Computer Science, Computer Literacy or Business Computer Applications (or substitute at least one-half unit of an elective course related to computers approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education or one-half unit as an elective from among the other subjects listed in this core curriculum)
1	One additional unit of advanced math or advanced science from among the following: Geometry, Calculus, Pre-Calculus, Algebra III, Probability and Statistics, Discrete Mathematics, Applied Mathematics III, Advanced Mathematics I, Advanced Mathematics II, Integrated Mathematics III, Biology II, Chemistry II, Physics, or Physics II.
17.5	UNITS

* Other courses may be acceptable as substitutes for courses in the core curriculum. Contact LOSFA for more information on acceptable substitute courses or check our Web site at www.osfa.la.gov.

HOW AND WHEN TO APPLY FOR TOPS?

To apply for TOPS, the student should complete the Free Application For Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at www.fafsa.ed.gov or the TOPS On-line Application at www.osfa.la.gov. The FAFSA must be completed by students who qualify for federal grant aid, and by students who are seeking other forms of financial aid. The TOPS On-line application may only be completed by students who can certify that they do not qualify for federal grant aid. In the event of a budget shortfall, students completing the TOPS On-line Application in lieu of the FAFSA will be the first to lose their TOPS award.

Graduates of 2008 - You **MUST** have an application receipt date **no later than July 1, 2008** to receive your TOPS award beginning with the upcoming college academic year, 2008-2009. Initial applications received after July 1, 2008 will not be funded until the subsequent college academic year, 2009-2010.

INITIAL APPLICATION RECEIPT DATE	RECEIVES TOPS FUNDING FOR:
Jan. 1 - July 1, 2008	8 semesters (12 quarters) beginning with Academic Year 2008-2009
July 2, 2008 - July 1, 2009	8 semesters (12 quarters) beginning with Academic Year 2009-2010*
July 2, 2009 - Aug. 29, 2009	7 semesters (10 quarters) beginning with Academic Year 2009-2010**
Aug. 30 - Oct. 29, 2009	6 semesters (9 quarters) beginning with Academic Year 2009-2010***
Initial applications received after Oct. 29, 2009	Ineligible for TOPS Award

*2008 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2008 application deadline for TOPS payments during Academic Year 2008-2009 may enroll full time in an eligible college or university at their own expense during that Academic Year and will still be eligible for 8 semesters of TOPS funding beginning in Academic Year 2009-2010 if their application is received by July 1, 2009 AND they have maintained TOPS continuation requirements. 2008 High School Graduates may also choose to delay their enrollment in an eligible institution until the 2009-2010 Academic Year and apply by July 1, 2009 for a full 8 semesters of eligibility.

**2008 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2008 application deadline for TOPS payments during Academic Year 2008-2009 AND the July 1, 2009 application deadline will be eligible for 7 semesters of TOPS funding beginning in Academic Year 2009-2010 if their application is received by August 29, 2009. If they enrolled full time in an eligible college or university during Academic Year 2008-2009, they must have maintained TOPS continuation requirements.

***2008 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2008 application deadline for TOPS payments during Academic Year 2008-2009 AND the July 1, 2009 application deadline AND the August 29, 2009 deadline will be eligible for 6 semesters of TOPS funding beginning in Academic Year 2009-2010 if their application is received by October 29, 2009. If they enrolled full time in an eligible college or university during Academic Year 2008-2009, they must have maintained TOPS continuation requirements.

NON HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATES

Students with superior intellect who enter college full-time prior to their nineteenth birthday without completing high school or an approved home study program may qualify for a TOPS award. Contact LOSFA for more information.

CONTACT LOSFA:



E-mail LOSFA at:
custserv@osfa.la.gov



Access LOSFA on the Internet at:
www.osfa.la.gov



Write LOSFA at:
P.O. Box 91202
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To speak to a representative,
call LOSFA at (800) 259-5626
Ext. 1012



LOSFA
Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

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Opportunity, Performance and
Honors Awards
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Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

This brochure incorporates changes in effect as of the edition date and applies to high school graduates of the class of 2008 and years thereafter.