



LOSFA

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

— A PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS —

ALL THINGS TOPS HOME STUDY

Your Guide to the
Taylor Opportunity Program
for Students

2025-2026

WHAT IS TOPS?

The Taylor Opportunity Program For Students (TOPS) is a program of state merit-based scholarships for Louisiana residents who attend one of the Louisiana public colleges and universities, schools that are a part of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Louisiana approved proprietary and cosmetology schools or institutions that are a part of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, (LAICU). TOPS has five award levels: Opportunity, Performance, Honors, Excellence (OPHE) and TOPS Tech.

INITIAL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

To qualify for TOPS, a student must:

- Be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident.
- Meet TOPS Louisiana residency requirements.
- Complete a BESE-approved home study program for 11th-grade, if applicable, and 12th-grade.
- Meet minimum ACT composite score requirements (listed with each award level).



AWARD LEVELS



TOPS OPPORTUNITY

4 YEAR AWARD

- Minimum Composite ACT Score: **20**
- Minimum SAT Score: **1030**
- Minimum CLT Score: **66**



TOPS PERFORMANCE

4 YEAR AWARD

- Minimum Composite ACT Score: **23**
- Minimum SAT Score: **1130**
- Minimum CLT Score: **80**



TOPS HONORS

4 YEAR AWARD

- Minimum Composite ACT Score: **27**
- Minimum SAT Score: **1260**
- Minimum CLT Score: **91**



TOPS EXCELLENCE

4 YEAR AWARD

- Minimum Composite ACT Score: **31**
- Minimum SAT Score: **1390**
- Minimum CLT Score: **101**



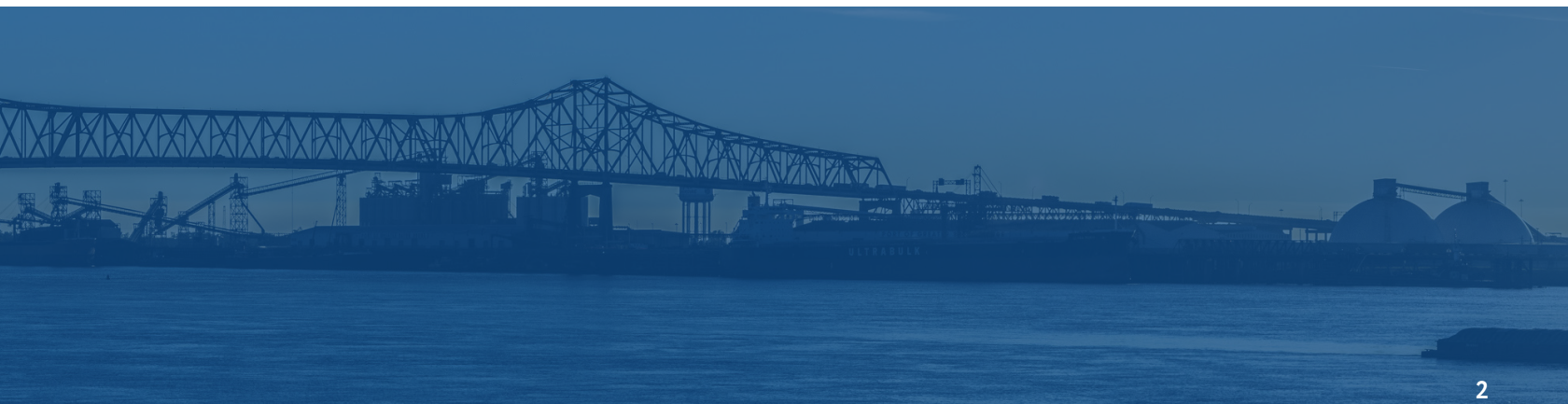
TOPS TECH

2 YEAR AWARD

- Minimum Composite ACT Score: **17**
- Minimum SAT Score: **920**
- Minimum CLT Score: **54**

AWARD REDUCTION

Your award may be reduced by one or two semesters because: 1. Your application was submitted after the deadline; 2. You qualified for TOPS based on an ACT score achieved in May, June, and/or July of the year you graduated from high school; or 3. You enrolled in an out-of-state college. See pages 5 and 6 for additional information.



AWARD AMOUNTS

TOPS OPPORTUNITY AWARD

AWARD AMOUNT: TOPS Award Amount

The TOPS Opportunity Award pays the TOPS Award Amount, which is based on the cost of tuition set by the administering agency for a student at that particular institution for the 2016-2017 academic year unless increased by an Act of the Legislature.

LAICU AWARD AMOUNT: Weighted Average of the TOPS Award Amount

If a student attends a college within the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), the award amount will be the weighted average award amount, which is calculated by dividing the amount paid to all students who were enrolled at a public four-year institution during the 2016-2017 academic year by the number of students paid.

LA NATIONAL GUARD AWARD AMOUNT: Tuition Exemption + \$600 Annual Book/Materials Stipend

Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard will receive the tuition exemption as mandated by Louisiana state law. Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard and eligible for the Opportunity Award will receive a sum of \$300 per semester (\$600 per academic year) to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional material.

TOPS PERFORMANCE AWARD

AWARD AMOUNT: TOPS Award Amount + \$400 Stipend

The TOPS Performance Award pays the TOPS Award Amount, which is based on the cost of tuition set by the administering agency for a student at that particular institution for the 2016-2017 academic year unless increased by an Act of the Legislature plus an annual stipend of \$400.

LAICU AWARD AMOUNT: Weighted Average of the TOPS Award Amount + \$400 Stipend

If a student attends a college within the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), the award amount will be the weighted average award amount, which is calculated by dividing the amount paid to all students who were enrolled at a public four-year institution during the 2016-2017 academic year by the number of students paid, plus an annual stipend of \$400.

LA NATIONAL GUARD AWARD AMOUNT: Tuition Exemption + \$600 Annual Book/Materials Stipend + \$800 Annual Educational Stipend

Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard will receive the tuition exemption as mandated by Louisiana state law. Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard and eligible for the Performance Award will receive a sum of \$300 per semester (\$600 per academic year) to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional material. In addition, Louisiana National Guard Performance Award recipients receive \$400 per semester (\$800 per academic year) for other educational expenses.

TOPS HONORS AWARD

AWARD AMOUNT: TOPS Award Amount + \$800 Stipend

The TOPS Honors Award pays the TOPS Award Amount, which is based on the cost of tuition set by the administering agency for a student at that particular institution for the 2016-2017 academic year unless increased by an Act of the Legislature plus an annual stipend of \$800.

LAICU AWARD AMOUNT: Weighted Average of the TOPS Award Amount

If a student attends a college within the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), the award amount will be the weighted average award amount, which is calculated by dividing the amount paid to all students who were enrolled at a public four-year institution during the 2016-2017 academic year by the number of students paid, plus an annual stipend of \$800.

LA NATIONAL GUARD AWARD AMOUNT: Tuition Exemption + \$600 Annual Book/Materials Stipend + \$1600 Annual Educational Stipend

Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard will receive the tuition exemption as mandated by Louisiana state law. Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard and eligible for the Honors Award will receive a sum of \$300 per semester (\$600 per academic year) to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional material. In addition, Louisiana National Guard Honors Award recipients receive \$800 per semester (\$1,600 per academic year) for other educational expenses.

TOPS EXCELLENCE AWARD

AWARD AMOUNT: Tuition and Fees or \$12,000 (whichever is less)

If a student attends a public institution in Louisiana, the award pays an annual amount equal to tuition and fees as reported to the Board of Regents in the annual mandatory survey on tuition and fees, or \$12,000, whichever is less.

LAICU AWARD AMOUNT: Tuition and Fees or \$8,500 (whichever is less)

If a student attends a private institution within the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU), the Award pays an annual amount equal to tuition and fees as reported to the Board of Regents in the annual mandatory survey on tuition and fees or \$8,500, whichever is less.

LA NATIONAL GUARD AWARD AMOUNT: Tuition Exemption + \$600 Annual Book/Materials Stipend + \$2000 Annual Educational Stipend

Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard will receive the tuition exemption as mandated by Louisiana state law. Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard and eligible for the Excellence Award, will receive a sum of \$300 per semester (\$600 per academic year) to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional material. In addition, Louisiana National Guard Excellence Award recipients receive \$1,000 per semester (\$2,000 per academic year) for other educational expenses.

TOPS TECH AWARD

AWARD AMOUNT: TOPS Award Amount

The TOPS Tech Award pays the TOPS Award Amount, which is based on the cost of tuition set by the administering agency for a student at that particular institution for the 2016-2017 academic year unless increased by an Act of the Legislature.

LA NATIONAL GUARD AWARD AMOUNT: Tuition Exemption + \$600 Annual Book/Materials Stipend

Students who are serving in the Louisiana National Guard will receive the tuition exemption as mandated by Louisiana state law. Students who are eligible for the TOPS Tech Award will receive a sum of \$300 per semester (\$600 per academic year) to be applied toward the cost of books and other instructional material.

PROPRIETARY AND COSMETOLOGY SCHOOL AWARD AMOUNT: Weighted Average of the TOPS Award Amount

If a student attends an approved proprietary and cosmetology school, the award amount will be the weighted average award amount, which is calculated by dividing the amount paid to all students who were enrolled in a technical program of study during the 2016-2017 academic year by the number of students paid.

LOUISIANA ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES (LAICU):

There are currently no TOPS Tech eligible programs at any LAICU institutions.

AWARD AMOUNTS BY INSTITUTION



TOPS
OPHE



TOPS
TECH

SECURING YOUR **TOPS AWARD**

2026 Home Study Graduates

You Need to Know This to Qualify for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Award

ACT AND SAT

Students who are enrolled in a BESE-approved home study program qualify for TOPS under Alternate Eligibility based on the ACT score.

The highest composite score achieved on a single exam of either the ACT, SAT, or CLT will be used to determine TOPS eligibility. TOPS does not consider the essay portion of the ACT or SAT in calculating the composite score needed to qualify. TOPS does not use a superscore when determining eligibility for a TOPS Award.

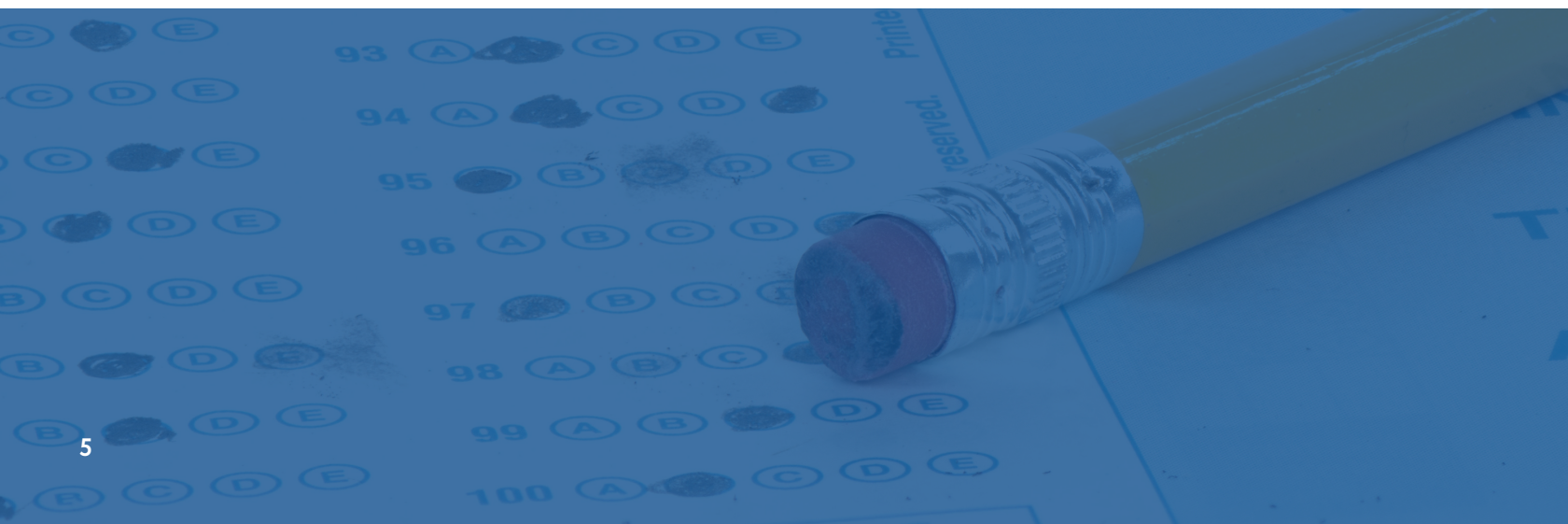
For 2026 high school graduates, a qualifying ACT, SAT, or CLT score must be achieved by the April ACT National Test Date: April 11, 2026. A qualifying score earned on the June 13 or July 11, 2026, ACT National Test date, or a qualifying SAT score earned on the May 2 or June 6, 2026 exams, or a qualifying CLT score earned on the April 16, May 16, June 11, or July 2026 exams will be accepted, but you will be penalized one semester (or two quarters) of eligibility. A qualifying score earned before September 30, 2026, may be accepted if the Board of Regents finds you were prevented from taking the test prior to August 1 of the year of graduation due to circumstances beyond your control and attributable to the administration of the test.

When registering for the ACT or SAT, you must enter code 1595 on the ACT registration form or code 9019 on the SAT registration form. When registering for the CLT, you must select TOPS/ LOSFA from the dropdown box. Enter the following codes for the high school code:

ACT – 969999

SAT – 970000

ACT 359, which lowers the ACT score required for initial qualification for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) award for students who complete approved home study programs, is effective for the graduating class of 2025.



You have two options to apply for TOPS: the TOPS Online Application or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®). The FAFSA® allows you to apply for TOPS, other state aid, and all federal aid.

To apply ONLY for TOPS, you should complete the TOPS Online Application.

To apply for federal student aid, TOPS, Louisiana GO Grant, and other state aid programs, you must complete the 2026-2027 FAFSA®: www.studentaid.gov

Federal student aid programs include Pell Grants, the Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG), student loans (subsidized and unsubsidized), Parent Loans for Undergraduate Students (PLUS), and the Federal Work Study (FWS) Program.

If you complete the FAFSA®, you do not have to fill out the TOPS Online Application to apply for TOPS.

The TOPS priority deadline for 2026 graduates is February 1, 2026. The final TOPS application deadline is July 1 following the one-year anniversary of high school graduation. You **MUST** file your FAFSA® or TOPS Online Application so that it is received by the federal processor or LOSFA by July 1, 2027, to receive full TOPS funding. **No payment of a TOPS award will be made until the initial FAFSA® or TOPS Online application has been received and you have been determined eligible for a TOPS award.**

Initial application receipt date	Receives TOPS funding for:
*Oct. 1, 2025 - July 1, 2027	8 semesters (12 quarters) Beginning with Academic Year 2026-2027
July 2 - Aug. 30, 2027	7 semesters (10 quarters) Beginning with Academic Year 2026-2027
Aug. 31 - Oct. 29, 2027	6 semesters (9 quarters) Beginning with Academic Year 2026-2027
Initial applications received after Oct. 29, 2027	Ineligible for TOPS award

**Initial release date of the 2026-2027 FAFSA® is subject to change.*

Students who enroll full-time before their initial application is received must also have met the TOPS continuing eligibility requirements to be eligible for TOPS funding for semesters, quarters, or terms attended prior to being made eligible.



KEEPING YOUR **TOPS AWARD**

2025-2026 College Students

You Need to Know This to Retain Your
Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) Award

ENROLLMENT

As a TOPS recipient, you must enroll as a full-time student during each fall and spring semester (or fall, winter, and spring term) during the academic year, remain continuously enrolled, and must earn 24 hours of credit during the academic year. Failure to do so will result in cancellation of your TOPS award. The academic year begins with the fall semester, quarter, or term and continues through all semesters, quarters, terms, and intersessions until the following fall semester, quarter, or term begins.

EXCEPTIONS

Exceptions to the requirements to enroll full-time, to remain continuously enrolled, or to earn 24 hours of credit each academic year may be granted for circumstances beyond the student's control. Students seeking an exception to these requirements must submit a request for exception form and provide all necessary documentation. If approved and all other continuation requirements are met, the award will be reinstated. Requests for exception must be received no later than six months after the date of the notice of cancellation.



Scan Here to Access
TOPS Exceptions Form

CREDIT HOURS

Earning 24 credit hours each academic year is the responsibility of the student. Advanced Placement credits and credits earned while you are in high school cannot be used to meet the 24-hour requirement. Hours earned in remedial courses and hours earned in intersessions will count toward your 24-hour requirement. All award recipients can use hours earned in summer sessions to meet their 24-hour per academic year requirement as well.

RENEWAL FAFSA®

Students who are eligible for federal financial aid are encouraged to complete the renewal FAFSA® as soon as possible. Students are not required to complete the FAFSA® to renew their TOPS Award.



STAY PREPARED



CUMULATIVE GRADE POINT AVERAGE

Steady Academic Progress:

Students who fail to maintain steady academic progress at the end of any semester, quarter, or term shall have payment of their award suspended. Steady Academic Progress is defined as a 2.00 minimum TOPS cumulative GPA.

Continuation GPA:

At the end of each academic year, the following TOPS cumulative grade point average (GPA) as determined by LOSFA must be maintained:

Opportunity Award:	2.30 with 24-47 Hours of Academic Credit
	2.50 with 48 or More Hours of Academic Credit
Performance Award:	3.00 with 24 or More Hours of Academic Credit
Honors Award:	3.00 with 24 or More Hours of Academic Credit
Excellence Award:	3.00 with 24 or More Hours of Academic Credit
TOPS Tech Award:*	2.50 with 24 or More Hours of Academic Credit

*Also applies to Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Excellence recipients enrolled in a technical program of study

The TOPS cumulative GPA is calculated on all coursework attempted and may not be the same as that calculated by the school.

Performance, Honors, or Excellence Award recipients who fail to maintain at least a 3.00 cumulative GPA at the end of any academic year will have their award converted to the Opportunity Award, provided they have maintained the cumulative GPA necessary for renewal at that award level. Once the recipient's award is converted to the Opportunity Award, the Performance, Honors, or Excellence Award cannot be reinstated.

Grades earned for college credit courses taken while in high school through dual enrollment programs are included in the calculation of your cumulative college GPA and will affect your TOPS continuing eligibility.

Students whose awards are suspended for failure to maintain steady academic progress or the required continuation cumulative GPA may be reinstated upon attainment of the required continuation GPA, provided that the period of ineligibility did not persist for more than two years (or one year for the TOPS Tech Award) and the student has met the requirements under the Enrollment paragraph on Page 7.

WHAT IS THE STUDENT HUB?

The Student Hub is an online system for students to track their TOPS status once they have been awarded and throughout their college careers.

Home study students cannot set up a Student Hub account until they have applied for TOPS by completing a FAFSA® or TOPS Online Application during their 12th-grade year. The TOPS Tracker will not be available as home study students do not have grades reported in the Student Transcript System (STS).

After high school graduation, students can track their award letter, Rights and Responsibilities, and all notices sent by LOSFA via their Student Hub account.

Once in college, all information relating to TOPS continuing eligibility and TOPS postsecondary GPA will be delivered via the Student Hub account.

HOW DO I LOG INTO THE STUDENT HUB?

To log into the Student Hub, go to mylosfa.la.gov and click on “**Student Hub**” at the **top of the homepage**.

In order to set up an account, you will need to use your assigned **LOSFA ID**. A LOSFA ID will not be generated until after a FAFSA® or TOPS Online Application is completed.

Once logged into your account, you will be able to check your TOPS status, notifications, etc.

While logged into your account, you will also have the ability to choose to grant your parent(s) permission to access your information.



Scan Here to Register for a Student Hub Account

WHEN WILL I KNOW IF I HAVE TOPS?

TOPS processing for eligibility begins in June each year. You will be notified of eligibility by email. You can also monitor your TOPS eligibility status in your Student Hub account.



Scan Here to access the Guide on Troubleshooting Student Hub Error Messages

APPLYING FOR TOPS

Students can submit a FAFSA® to be considered for all federal and some state financial aid. Students only interested in TOPS/TOPS Tech awards can apply using the TOPS Online Application.

NAVIGATING YOUR OPTIONS

EITHER of these options will allow you to apply for TOPS. Carefully consider your financial needs when navigating your options to apply for state and federal financial aid.

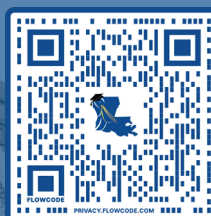
I would like to apply for state aid and all available federal aid



Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA®)

Apply for Pell Grant, Work Study, GO Grant, federal loans, TOPS/TOPS Tech, etc.

I would only like to apply for TOPS/TOPS Tech



TOPS Online Application

Apply for TOPS/TOPS Tech

If required, accept or reject individual aid packages offered by the college

IMPORTANT NOTE!

Students must be enrolled full-time at an eligible institution to receive their TOPS Award; however, some institutions may require students to take additional steps to accept their financial aid package. Follow the directions included with your financial aid offer and contact the financial aid office at your institution if you have any questions.

6 TIPS TO AVOID TOPS PROCESSING ERRORS

1

Ensure that your name, date of birth, and home address are the same on all documents (school records, ACT/SAT registrations, FAFSA®, college applications, etc.) A good rule of thumb is to write your name the way it is listed on your social security card. Check for accuracy when entering your information on documents. Spelling, spacing, punctuation, and abbreviations matter!

2

Include the ACT TOPS code of 1595 and/or the SAT TOPS code of 9019 on all ACT/SAT registrations. For the CLT registration, please choose TOPS/LOSFA in the drop-down box.

3

Be prepared to submit additional documentation to prove residency if you or the parent listed on your FAFSA®/TOPS Online Application were not Louisiana residents for at least 24 months prior to your anticipated graduation date.

4

Make sure that both the student and the contributor sign your FAFSA® before submission and that the email address on your FAFSA® is the one to which you want your TOPS eligibility notices sent.

5

Create a Student Hub account to track initial TOPS eligibility and notify LOSFA immediately if you cannot create your account.

6

Make sure LOSFA has all home study-related documentation on file to establish initial eligibility.



JUST SO YOU KNOW...

REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION

- The names of students who indicate they were home schooled on the FAFSA® or the TOPS Online Application will automatically be submitted to LDOE to verify their 11th and 12th-grade home study status. If a student doesn't indicate home schooled on the FAFSA® or TOPS Online Application, students or parents can submit copies of the 11th and 12th-grade BESE Home Study Approval Notifications to LOSFA directly.
- LOSFA also requires documentation regarding the student's 9th and 10th-grade years before processing them for TOPS eligibility.
- If the student ever attended a public and/or private high school for any part of their 9th and/or 10th-grade year, LOSFA requires a letter from the high school on the school's letterhead and signed by the principal, headmaster, or appropriate personnel at the high school previously attended stating the dates of attendance and whether or not the student was in good standing at the time they left. Certification can also be obtained from the school board office.
- For students who were in a BESE-approved home study program for 9th and/or 10th grade, LOSFA will need a copy of the 9th and/or 10th-grade Home Study Approval Notification from LDOE.
- Students who attended a registered nonpublic school (not seeking state approval) for 9th and/or 10th-grade can provide a copy of their Registration Confirmation from BESE or a letter from their home study administrator (may be a parent) stating the student's dates of attendance.
- All documentation required to establish initial eligibility, including 9th and 10th-grade documentation, ACT scores, and citizenship/residency documentation, must be received by our office no later than January 15th following the one-year anniversary of your high school graduation date. For example, May 2026 graduates must submit documentation by January 15, 2028.

ACT/SAT/CLT

- LOSFA has an agreement with ACT, Inc that requires them to electronically report scores for students who indicate they are a resident of Louisiana. Additional agreements are in place with SAT and CLT to electronically report scores to LOSFA. You can also have scores sent to LOSFA by using our ACT Code (1595), SAT Code (9019) or selecting the TOPS/LOSFA in the drop-down box on the CLT during registration for the test. For ACT, use School Code "969999" to indicate home study.
- For SAT, use School Code "970000" to indicate home study.
- The deadline to achieve a qualifying score for TOPS is on or before the ACT national test date in April in the academic year you graduate from high school. You may still qualify or upgrade your award by using May, June, and/or July test scores, including scores from a special ACT or SAT, but your period of eligibility for the award will be reduced by one semester or two quarters.
- Students who fail to achieve a qualifying ACT score by July 31st of the graduating year shall not be considered for an award.
- TOPS uses the highest composite score achieved on a single test and does not use superscoring.
- There is no exception to the TOPS ACT/SAT/CLT requirement. Testing accommodations must be arranged with ACT, SAT or CLT.

COMMON TOPS QUESTIONS

WILL TOPS COVER ALL OF MY TUITION?

No. ACT 18 of the 2016 Louisiana Legislature decoupled TOPS from tuition and set the “fully funded” amount going forward as the amount of tuition charged by the institution for the 2016-17 Academic Year. Students still must pay all other attendance costs (COA).

CAN I USE TOPS OUT OF STATE IF MY MAJOR IS NOT OFFERED IN LOUISIANA?

No, TOPS cannot be used out-of-state except at out-of-state private colleges that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students, at which the majority of the students are deaf and hard of hearing.

CAN ACT SUPERScores BE USED TO QUALIFY FOR TOPS?

TOPS uses the highest composite score achieved on a single test and does not use superscoring to determine eligibility.

I ATTENDED A TRADITIONAL SCHOOL UNTIL THE END OF MY 11TH-GRADE YEAR IN HIGH SCHOOL BUT SWITCHED TO A HOME STUDY PROGRAM MY 12TH-GRADE YEAR. CAN THE RULE THAT I MUST HAVE COMPLETED BOTH 11TH AND 12TH-GRADE IN HOME STUDY BE WAIVED?

In limited circumstances, you may be granted an exception to the rule that you must complete both 11th and 12th-grades in a home study program. You must complete a Request for Exception form and return it to LOSFA with documentation indicating that the reason you did not complete both 11th and 12th-grades in a home study program was beyond your control.

WHAT CLASSES MUST I TAKE TO QUALIFY FOR TOPS, AND HOW CAN I SEND MY TRANSCRIPT TO LOSFA?

Home study students qualify for TOPS under Alternate Eligibility, which means they are not required to complete the TOPS Core Curriculum or meet the TOPS Core GPA requirement.

I'M NOT GOING TO COLLEGE IMMEDIATELY AFTER I GRADUATE FROM HIGH SCHOOL. WHAT SHOULD I DO TO PUT MY TOPS ON HOLD?

There is nothing you need to do, except apply by completing a TOPS Online Application or FAFSA®. Even if you are not planning to go to college immediately, you should still apply for TOPS in your senior year to avoid missing any deadlines. You must enroll for the first time as a full-time student in an eligible postsecondary institution no later than the fall semester following the first anniversary of the date you graduated from high school.

LINKS AND RESOURCES



HOME STUDY
WEBPAGE



TOPS
WEBPAGE



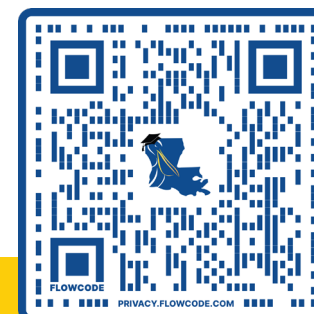
TOPS
Q&A



TOPS
FORMS



FAFSA®
WEBPAGE



ACT/SAT
INFORMATION



LOSFA

LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

— A PROGRAM OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS —

tops.homestudy@la.gov

CONTACT **LOSFA**



Schedule **Virtual Office Hours**
(Available 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. on
Monday – Friday)



Visit mylosfa.la.gov



Email custserv@la.gov



Ask **LEX**
(LOSFA's virtual response
assistant, available 24/7)