

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

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

September 2021

AWARD COMPONENTS OF TOPS (EXCEPT TECH AWARD)			
STANDARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ¹		OPPORTUNITY AWARD	PERFORMANCE AWARD
High School Grade Point Average (GPA) ²		2.50 (GPA computed on core courses only)	3.25 (GPA computed on core courses only)
Core Units		19 ³	19 ³
ACT Composite Score (or SAT Equivalent)		Prior year state average ⁴	23 ⁴
BESE-Approved Home-Study Student Eligibility ⁵		Currently an ACT of 22 (2 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)	Currently an ACT of 24 (1 point above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)
Out-of-State Student Eligibility ⁶		Currently an ACT of 23 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)	Currently an ACT of 26 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)
Must Enroll Full Time ^{7, 8, 9}		As a first-time freshman, by the fall semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation	As a first-time freshman, by the fall semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation
Eligible Institutions ¹⁰		Louisiana public & LAICU postsecondary institutions and certain cosmetology and proprietary schools	Louisiana public & LAICU postsecondary institutions and certain cosmetology and proprietary schools
Maximum Award at Public Schools *TOPS is fully funded for the 2021-2022 Academic Year		Payment of TOPS is contingent upon appropriations by the Louisiana Legislature.	Payment of TOPS is contingent upon appropriations by the Louisiana Legislature.
Maximum Award at LAICU Institutions ¹⁰		Weighted average of prior year TOPS payments to students at public-degree granting schools	Weighted average of prior year TOPS payments to students at public-degree granting schools
RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS ¹¹		OPPORTUNITY AWARD	PERFORMANCE AWARD
Maintain Steady Academic Progress (Based on TOPS cumulative GPA which is calculated on all course work attempted and may not be the same as that calculated by the school.)		2.30 with 24 - 47 Hours of Academic Credit 2.50 with 48 Hours of Academic Credit Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	3.00 with 24 or More Hours of Academic Credit ¹² Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)
Hours Earned Per Academic Year ¹³		Enroll full time and maintain continuous enrollment each semester, earn 24 hours or more each academic year	Enroll full time and maintain continuous enrollment each semester, earn 24 hours or more each academic year
Award Reinstated Upon Recovery of Required GPA ¹⁴		Yes	Yes, but reinstated as an Opportunity Award
Award Limit ^{15, 16}		4 years or 8 semesters	4 years or 8 semesters
		HONORS AWARD	
		3.50 (GPA computed on core courses only)	3.50 (GPA computed on core courses only)
		19 ³	19 ³
		27 ⁴	27 ⁴
		Currently an ACT of 28 (1 point above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)	Currently an ACT of 30 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)
		Currently an ACT of 30 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)	Currently an ACT of 30 (3 points above standard, in lieu of core units and GPA)
		As a first-time freshman, by the fall semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation	As a first-time freshman, by the fall semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation
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		Weighted average of prior year TOPS payments to students at public-degree granting schools	Weighted average of prior year TOPS payments to students at public-degree granting schools
		HONORS AWARD	
		3.00 with 24 or More Hours of Academic Credit ¹² Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS Cumulative GPA)	3.00 with 24 or More Hours of Academic Credit ¹² Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS Cumulative GPA)
		Enroll full time and maintain continuous enrollment each semester, earn 24 hours or more each academic year	Enroll full time and maintain continuous enrollment each semester, earn 24 hours or more each academic year
		Yes, but reinstated as an Opportunity Award	Yes, but reinstated as an Opportunity Award
		4 years or 8 semesters	4 years or 8 semesters

- 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 a 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 - Students who are non high school graduates 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.
- 3 - 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. See reverse side for TOPS Core Curriculum.
- 4 - A qualifying score achieved on a National, International, Military, or Special ACT or equivalent SAT taken before August 1 of the year of high school graduation will be accepted. Scores on tests taken after August 1 of the year of high school graduation will not be accepted unless the student is granted an exception for a score earned on a test taken before September 30 of the year of high school graduation based on proof that the student was prevented from taking the test prior to August 1 due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and attributable to the administration of the test. 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. The score for the writing section is NOT included.
- 5 - 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). If the student previously attended a Louisiana high school, he must complete at least the 11th and 12th grade of an approved home study program.
- 6 - Applicable to students who graduate from an approved out-of-state high school and who meet the residency requirements (See Note 1).
- 7 - A qualified student who enlists and enters on active duty in the Armed Forces within one year of graduation from high school must enroll in an eligible college or university no later than the semester, quarter or term following the one year anniversary of separation from active duty. 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.

- 8 - Exceptions for "first-time freshman", "full-time and continuous enrollment and/or 24 hour" requirements may be granted for demonstrated cause. Contact LOSFA or go to <https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/Exception-Request-Form4.pdf> for an application.
- 9 - Students who met the academic requirements for a TOPS award and enrolled as a first-time freshman at an out-of-state college or at an eligible in-state college but subsequently enrolled at an eligible out-of-state college may apply for TOPS by submitting the Application to Return from an Out-of-State College no later than July 1st immediately following the semester, quarter or term during which the student returns and enrolls as a full-time student in an eligible Louisiana college. All supporting documents must be received no later than January 15th following the deadline. The student must have met the renewal requirements for TOPS while enrolled out-of-state. Students who first enrolled full-time in a Louisiana college is July 1 following the first semester, quarter or term of enrollment at an eligible Louisiana college.
- 10 - LAICU schools are those institutions that are members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. "Certain cosmetology and proprietary schools" include any school with a valid and current certificate of registration issued by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education, and any proprietary school with a valid and current license issued by the Board of Regents that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the U.S. Department of Education.
- 11 - 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.
- 12 - Students who fail to maintain a 3.00 GPA will have their award converted to the Opportunity Award.
- 13 - The academic year begins with the fall semester, quarter or term and ends at the beginning of the following fall semester, quarter or term. All summer sessions and intersessions within this time frame are included. Only courses for which credit is earned during an academic year will be counted towards the 24-hour requirement. In order to earn credit for a course, you must receive a grade of "D" or better.
- 14 - Provided that the period of ineligibility did not last for more than two years.
- 15 - Any student who successfully completes an academic undergraduate degree in less than the eight semesters of eligibility may receive any remaining award benefits if the student enrolls in a professional/postgraduate academic program at an eligible institution and continues to meet all academic and other requirements for continuation of the award. TOPS may not be used to pursue a second baccalaureate degree.
- 16 - Recipients may pursue an academic degree or technical diplomas or both, but may not exceed the award limit.

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