

LOUISIANA'S TAYLOR OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM FOR STUDENTS "TOPS" TECH AWARD

September 2011

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

STANDARD ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS ¹	TECH AWARD
High School Grade Point Average (GPA)	2.50 (GPA computed on core courses only)
Tech Core Units	Option 1 - 17 Core Units ² Option 2 - 19 Core Units ²
ACT Composite Score (or SAT Equivalent)	17 ³ or higher or a silver level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system
Must Enroll Full Time	As a first-time freshman, by the first semester following the first anniversary of high school graduation ^{4, 5}
Eligible Institutions	Louisiana Technical College campuses and other public postsecondary or LAICU ⁶ schools that provide skill or occupational training and certain cosmetology and proprietary schools ⁷
Maximum Award at Public Schools That Do Not Offer a Baccalaureate Degree	An amount that equals tuition ⁸
Maximum Award at Public Schools That Offer Baccalaureate Degrees and at LAICU ⁶ Institutions and certain cosmetology and proprietary schools ⁷	The average of TOPS Tech payments paid to students attending public schools that do not offer a baccalaureate degree
BESE-APPROVED HOME-STUDY STUDENT ELIGIBILITY ⁹	ACT of 19 (2 points above standard in lieu of core units and GPA)
OUT-OF-STATE STUDENT ELIGIBILITY ¹⁰	ACT of 20 (3 points above standard in lieu of core units and GPA)
RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS ¹¹	TECH AWARD
Maintain Steady Academic Progress (Based on the TOPS cumulative GPA which is calculated on all course work attempted and may not be the same as that calculated by the school)	2.50 end of academic year Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms or semesters (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 ⁵
Award Reinstated Upon Recovery of Required GPA	Yes ¹²
Award Limits	2 years

TOPS TECH CORE CURRICULUM	
UNITS	COURSE
3	English I, II and III
1	English IV, Business English or Senior Applications in English
1	Algebra I, or Algebra I, Parts 1 and 2 (two units); or Applied Algebra I or Applied Mathematics I and II (two units)
2	Geometry, Applied Geometry, Applied Mathematics III, Algebra II, Math Essentials, Financial Mathematics, Advanced Mathematics I, Advanced Mathematics II, Discrete Mathematics, or Probability and Statistics
1	Biology
1	Chemistry or Applied Chemistry
1	Earth Science, Environmental Science, Physical Science, Integrated Science, Biology II, Chemistry II, Physics I, Physics II, Physics for Technology or Agriscience I and Agriscience II (both for one unit)
1	American History
1	World History, Western Civilization or World Geography
1	Civics and Free Enterprise (one unit combined) or Civics (one unit)
Remaining courses must be selected from one of the two following options:	
<u>Option 1</u>	
1	Fine Arts Survey (or substitute two units of performance courses in music, dance or theater; or two units of visual art; or two units of studio art; or a career/technical studies course approved by Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE); or substitute one unit of an elective from among the other subjects listed in this core curriculum) or Speech III and Speech IV (two units)
2	Foreign Language, Technical Writing, Speech I or Speech II
1	Computer education program of studies approved by BESE
17	Total Core Curriculum Units ^{13, 14, 15}
<u>Option 2</u>	
4	A career major comprised of a sequence of related specialty courses and approved for the school by BESE
1	Related or technical field course
1	Basic computer course
19	Total Core Curriculum

¹ - Applicable to students who are U.S. citizens or permanent residents who are eligible to apply for U.S. citizenship; graduate from Louisiana public or approved non-public high schools; and 1) are the dependent of a parent(s) who is a resident of Louisiana for at least two years prior to the month of the dependent's high school graduation; or 2) a dependent of a member of the Armed Forces who claims Louisiana as his legal residence and has filed Louisiana tax returns; or 3) who is stationed in Louisiana and completes a DD Form 2058 to become a legal resident within 180 days of reporting to Louisiana; or 4) 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 5) 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, Military or Special ACT or equivalent Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) no later than April 30 in the year of high school graduation. Awards will be reduced if the first qualifying score is achieved on a test 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. The score for the writing section is **NOT** included. Also be sure to enter your social security number on your ACT.

⁴ - 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 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 so that it is received within one year of separation from active duty.

⁵ - 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 www.osfa.la.gov/exceptionform for an application. The academic year includes the summer session.

⁶ - Non-public institutions that are members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU).

⁷ - Any school with a valid and current certificate of registration issued by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology and that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education, and any proprietary school with a valid and current license issued by the Board of Regents and accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education.

⁸ - Tuition varies from institution to institution. Your institution may include fees in your tuition that are not covered by TOPS.

⁹ - 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).

¹⁰ - 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 Tech Award with an ACT score of 20 or higher, if a parent(s) of the dependent student: (1) was actively engaged in work or other activity on behalf of a Louisiana employer or sponsor; (2) actually lived in Louisiana for at least the 24-months preceding the date the work or activity outside the United States began, and (3) remained a Louisiana resident through the date of the student's graduation from high school.

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 1st.

¹² - Provided that the period of ineligibility did not extend for more than one year.

¹³ - Other courses may be acceptable as substitutes for courses in the Core Curriculum. Contact LOSFA for more information on acceptable substitute courses.

¹⁴ - The student may also qualify by completing the Core Curriculum requirements for the TOPS Opportunity, Performance and Honors awards. See the TOPS Opportunity, Performance and Honors Award Brochure.

¹⁵ - Students following the La Department of Education career diploma path or LA Core 4 curriculum must incorporate the appropriate TOPS Tech Core Curriculum courses to qualify for an award under this program.

WHAT IS TOPS?

Louisiana's Taylor 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 four award components. One component, the TOPS Tech Award, is detailed herein. (See separate brochure for the TOPS Opportunity, Performance and Honors Awards.)

WHAT IS THE TOPS TECH AWARD?

Unique among the TOPS scholarships, the TOPS Tech Award was created by the Louisiana Legislature with the sole intention of promoting a skilled workforce in Louisiana. The TOPS Tech Award is offered to qualified high school graduates and provides up to two years of skill or occupational training, to be pursued at an accredited Louisiana postsecondary institution that offers a vocational or technical education certificate, diploma or non-academic degree.

WHAT TYPE OF TRAINING CAN I RECEIVE WITH THE TOPS TECH AWARD?

The award may be used to enroll in a variety of technical and skill programs ranging from Automotive Technology to Computer Electronics Technology to Cosmetology to Practical Nursing. For information on the programs that are available, go to the Louisiana Technical College Web site (www.ltc.edu) or the Web site of your local college, proprietary school or cosmetology school.

WHERE MAY I USE THE TOPS TECH AWARD?

The TOPS Tech Award may be used for up to two years of skill or occupational training at any campus of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System, accredited two- or four-year public college or university, or private college or university (members of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, LAICU) that offers a vocational or technical education certificate, diploma or non-academic degree program.

Students who are eligible for the TOPS Tech Award may also use their awards at the following schools: any school with a valid and current certificate of registration issued by the Louisiana State Board of Cosmetology and that is accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education, and any proprietary school, with a valid and current license issued by the Board of Regents and accredited by an accrediting organization recognized by the United States Department of Education.

To be eligible for TOPS Tech, these schools must also comply with all applicable laws and administrative rules concerning initial eligibility and continuing eligibility for schools participating in the TOPS Tech Award Program.

The TOPS Tech Award MAY NOT be used at any institution to pursue an academic program or degree.

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 instead of the FAFSA will be the first to lose their TOPS award.

Graduates of 2012 - The TOPS application deadline is July 1 following the one year anniversary of high school graduation. You **MUST** file your FAFSA or TOPS On-line Application so that it is received by the federal processor by July 1, 2013 to receive full TOPS funding. However, to ensure timely processing and award notification, students are strongly encouraged to file at least six weeks prior to entry into college. Be sure to **PRINT** and **RETAIN** your dated FAFSA or TOPS On-line Application confirmation page that includes the confirmation number in case verification of timely filing is required. *No payment of a TOPS award will be made until the initial FAFSA or on-line application has been received and you have been determined eligible for a TOPS award.*

INITIAL APPLICATION RECEIPT DATE	RECEIVES TOPS FUNDING FOR:
Jan. 1, 2012 - July 1, 2013	2 years beginning with Academic Year 2012-2013*
July 2 - Aug. 30, 2013	2 years, less 1 semester, beginning with Academic Year 2012-2013 **
Aug. 31 - Oct. 29, 2013	2 years, less 2 semesters, beginning with Academic Year 2012-2013 ***
Initial applications received after Oct. 29, 2013	Ineligible for TOPS Tech Award

*If your initial FAFSA or on-line application is received after July 1 immediately following your graduation from high school, the payment of your TOPS award will not be made until your application is received and you are determined eligible for a TOPS award. If you enroll for the first time as a full time student before your FAFSA or on-line application is received, you must meet the TOPS Continuing Eligibility Requirements to receive payments of your TOPS award after the first semester, quarter or term of your full time enrollment at an eligible college or university.

** If you are a 2012 high school graduate and your application is received from July 2, 2013, through August 30, 2013, you will be eligible to receive two years, less 1 semester, of TOPS Tech funding beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year. You must also meet TOPS Continuing Eligibility Requirements if you attend college during the 2012-2013 academic year.

*** If you are a 2012 high school graduate and your application is received from August 31, 2013 through October 29, 2013, you will be eligible to receive 2 years, less 2 semesters, of TOPS Tech funding beginning with the 2012-2013 academic year. You must also meet TOPS Continuing Eligibility Requirements if you attend college during the 2012-2013 academic year.

CONTACT LOSFA



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Disclaimer: This brochure is current as of the edition date and is provided for informational purposes only. The eligibility requirements and rules governing the TOPS program are subject to legislative and regulatory amendments subsequent to the edition date of this brochure. TOPS applicants are responsible for determining the program requirements at the time of application and should not rely on this brochure as a full disclosure of all qualifications required for a TOPS Tech Award.



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Tech Award
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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 2012 applying for the TOPS Tech Award.