

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

September 2008

For more information call the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance at (800) 259-5626, Ext. 1012 or visit our website 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
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
Maximum Award at Public Schools That Offer Baccalaureate Degrees and at LAICU ⁶ Institutions and certain cosmetology and proprietary schools ⁷	The average of awards paid to students attending public schools that do not offer a baccalaureate degree
BESE-APPROVED HOME-STUDY STUDENT ELIGIBILITY ⁸	ACT of 19 (2 points above standard in lieu of core units and GPA)
OUT-OF-STATE STUDENT ELIGIBILITY ⁹	ACT of 20 (3 points above standard in lieu of core units and GPA)
RENEWAL REQUIREMENTS ¹⁰	TECH AWARD
Maintain 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 ¹¹
Award Limits	2 years

- 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) 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 the first qualifying score was 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.
- 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.

TOPS TECH CORE CURRICULA	
UNITS	COURSE
3	English I, II and III
1	English IV or Business English
1	Algebra I, or Algebra I, Parts 1 and 2 (two units); or Applied Mathematics I and II (two units)
2	Geometry, Applied Mathematics III, Algebra II, 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 I</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)
2	Foreign Language, Technical Writing, Speech I or Speech II
1	Computer education program of studies approved by BESE
17 Total Core Curriculum Units ^{12, 13}	
<u>Option II</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 Units ^{12, 13}	

- 5 - Exceptions for "first-time freshman", "continuous full-time enrollment and/or 24 hour" requirement may be granted for justifiable cause. Contact LOSFA 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 - 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).
- 9 - 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, 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.
- 10 - 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.
- 11 - Provided that the period of ineligibility did not extend for more than one year.
- 12 - Other courses may be acceptable as substitutes for courses in the core curricula. Contact LOSFA for more information on acceptable substitute courses.
- 13 - 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.

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 following is a representative, but not inclusive sample of certificate, diploma or non-academic degree programs that may be earned with the TOPS Tech Award: Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Automotive Technology, Accounting Technology, Carpentry, Computer Electronics Technology, Diesel Mechanics, Drafting and Design Technology, Industrial Instrumentation Technology, Industrial Maintenance Technology, Practical Nursing and Welding.

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.

Beginning with the 2009-10 Award Year, 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.

In order 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 in lieu of the FAFSA will be the first to lose their TOPS award.

Graduates of 2009 - You **MUST** have an application receipt date **no later than July 1, 2009** to receive your TOPS award beginning with the upcoming college academic year, 2009-2010. Initial applications received after July 1, 2009 will not be funded until the subsequent college academic year, 2010-2011. Be sure to **PRINT** and **RETAIN** your dated FAFSA confirmation page that includes the confirmation number in case verification of timely filing is required.

INITIAL APPLICATION RECEIPT DATE	RECEIVES TOPS Tech FUNDING FOR:
Jan. 1 - July 1, 2009	2 years beginning with Academic Year 2009-2010
July 2, 2009 - July 1, 2010	2 years beginning with Academic Year 2010-2011*
July 2, 2010 - Aug. 30, 2010	2 years, less 1 semester, beginning with Academic Year 2010-2011**
Aug. 31 - Oct. 29, 2010	2 years, less 2 semesters, beginning with Academic Year 2010-2011***
Initial applications received after Oct. 29, 2010	Ineligible for TOPS Award

*2009 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2009 application deadline for TOPS Tech payments during Academic Year 2009-2010 may enroll full time in an eligible college or university at their own expense during that Academic Year and will still be eligible for 2 years of TOPS Tech funding beginning in Academic Year 2010-2011 if their application is received by July 1, 2010 AND they have maintained TOPS continuation requirements. 2009 High School Graduates may also choose to delay their enrollment in an eligible institution until the 2010-2011 Academic Year and apply by July 1, 2010 for a full 2 years of eligibility.

**2009 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2009 application deadline for TOPS Tech payments during Academic Year 2009-2010 AND the July 1, 2010 application deadline will be eligible for 2 years, less 1 semester, of TOPS Tech funding beginning in Academic Year 2010-2011 if their application is received by August 30, 2010. If they enrolled full time in an eligible college or university during Academic Year 2009-2010, they must have maintained TOPS continuation requirements.

***2009 high school graduates who miss the July 1, 2009 application deadline for TOPS Tech payments during Academic Year 2009-2010 AND the July 1, 2010 application deadline AND the August 30, 2010 deadline will be eligible for 2 years, less 2 semesters, of TOPS Tech funding beginning in Academic Year 2010-2011 if their application is received by October 29, 2010. If they enrolled full time in an eligible college or university during Academic Year 2009-2010, they must have maintained TOPS continuation requirements.

CONTACT LOSFA



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This public document was published at a total cost of \$4,919.13. 75,000 copies of this public document were published in this first printing at a cost of \$4,919.13. The total cost of all printing of this document, including reprints, is \$4,919.13. This document was published by the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission, P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, La. 70821-9202, and printed by State Printing, 950 Brickyard Lane, Baton Rouge, La. 70802, to inform parents and students about the Louisiana Tuition Opportunity Program for Students ("TOPS") under special exemption by the Division of Administration. This material was printed in accordance with the standards for printing by state agencies established pursuant to R.S. 43:31.

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.



Taylor Opportunity Program for Students
Tech Award
September 2008 Edition

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 2009 and years thereafter applying for the TOPS Tech Award.