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College Scholarships And Grants In Louisiana

Do You Need Money for School in Louisiana?

The state of Louisiana has set up an agency called the [Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance](http://www.osfa.state.la.us/) (LOSFA) to administer its financial aid programs. LOSFA maintains an older but still serviceable website where you can find all the information currently available on the different types of monetary assistance given to Louisiana students.

Taylor Opportunity Program For Students

Save

The [Taylor Opportunity Program for Students](http://www.osfa.state.la.us/schgrt6.htm) (TOPS) is a scholarship program that serves as the state's primary conduit of financial aid to college students. Established in 1998, TOPS was originally intended as a way to help needy students attend college in Louisiana, but local politicians saw a shortcut to popularity and changed the criteria to direct funding to middle-class families instead.

Although TOPS had become what is usually called a merit-based award, the academic performance standard demanded was so low as to be attainable by a great many average students, which has recently presented challenges in funding. Budget constraints are beginning to tighten the TOPS criteria, but since it is still considered politically perilous to make any major encroachment on this entitlement, funding part of your college education using TOPS is very easy for Louisiana students.

TOPS is distributed to all students who attend school in Louisiana and can clear a minimal bar in terms of scores and grades. Payment, therefore, is virtually guaranteed, and if you lose eligibility before completing your degree program no reimbursement is sought by the state. Each of the four levels of payment TOPS makes is based on your academic performance, and TOPS pays all or part of your tuition, plus some fees.

There are lists of eligible institutions posted under these four categories:

Louisiana Public Colleges and Universities, Louisiana Community and Technical College System, Proprietary and Cosmetology Schools approved by the state, and members of a group called the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities. The four levels of award are described below.



- The TOPS Opportunity Award pays the weighted average of tuition at public institutions that grant degrees. This award goes to students at schools in the Louisiana Public Colleges and Universities category. The required GPA is 2.5, and you must have a standardized test score of 20 (ACT) or 1020 (SAT) to qualify.
- The TOPS Performance Award is even more generous, paying not only tuition but also approved fees and \$400 of your living expenses if you attend a school in the Louisiana Public Colleges and Universities category. You may also attend one of the schools in the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities, but only the weighted average of public school tuition (plus the stipend) will be paid. You must have a GPA of 3.0 and a test score of 23 (ACT) or 1050 (SAT).
- The TOPS Honors Award criteria are almost identical to those for the Performance Award, with two important exceptions: the required ACT is 27 (or SAT of 1210), and the stipend is doubled to \$800.
- The TOPS Tech Award is given to students at a school in any of the four eligible categories who are pursuing a degree or certification in some form of occupational training. If you are in such a program at an eligible four-year school instead of one of the cheaper schools in the Community and Technical College System or the Proprietary and Cosmetology Schools, you will receive only the amount of tuition charged at one of the cheaper schools. However, the scores required are an ACT of 17 or an SAT of 820, which are very easy to reach.

Rockefeller State Wildlife Scholarship

The [Rockefeller State Wildlife Scholarship](http://www.osfa.state.la.us/rock.htm) goes to students at schools in the Louisiana Public Colleges and Universities category who are majoring in forestry, wildlife, or marine science. The Rockefeller brings \$2,000 a year to undergraduates and \$3,000 to graduate students. The scholarship is capped at \$12,000 for three years (undergraduate) or two years (graduate work). Here are the eligibility criteria:

- You must be a U. S. citizen or an eligible noncitizen.
- You must have one year of in-state residency as of July 1 of the year in which you receive the scholarship.
- You must attend school full-time, and undergraduates must have 60 credit hours plus a 2.5 GPA. Graduate students must maintain a 3.0 GPA.

Other Financial Aid

Many local organizations in Louisiana offer their own awards to help college students, so check with your town's social clubs and businesses. The Louisiana Solid Waste Association hands out the Dr. Gordon P. Boutwell, Jr. Memorial Scholarship (\$1,000 to a student in an environmental field), the Louisiana Farm Bureau Foundation gives \$1,500 [scholarships \(http://www.lfbf.org/foundation/\)](http://www.lfbf.org/foundation/) to agricultural students, and there are numerous similar philanthropic contributions made each year.

For more information on Louisiana grants, consult this [page \(https://www.collegescholarships.org/grants/states/louisiana.htm\)](https://www.collegescholarships.org/grants/states/louisiana.htm).

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