

COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's
Professional School Counselors



March 2024

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Student Opportunities

From the LOSFA Counselor Communication

Please share with principals, counselors, and teachers.

LOSFA is excited to share the dates, times, and registration links for the 2024 TOPS Processing Webinar for Professional School Counselors! The interactive virtual event is designed to help schools minimize TOPS processing errors for their seniors. This year's webinar will contain the following information:

- Webinar Part 1 will be all things related to TOPS Processing for your seniors.
- Webinar Part 2 will be an update on Better FAFSA® and how this may affect TOPS Processing.
- On Friday, March 8, 2024, a webinar will be offered that covers both Part 1 and Part 2.

The webinar is being offered at the following times:

- [Friday March 8, 2024, at 9:00 AM - Part 1 & Part 2](#)

Use the links above to register for the webinar of your choice. You will receive an email confirmation containing the Zoom login information after registering. The email will come from Rhonda Bridevaux and Hailey Pellegrin <no-reply@zoom.us>. Please check your junk or spam mail if you do not receive the email in your inbox.

Please note: Registration is required to join the webinar.

We look forward to you joining us to learn about college access for your students!

Please email LOSFA.counselors@la.gov or ldefinancialaid@la.gov with questions.

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The 2024-2025 FAFSA is Open

Please share with principals, counselors, and teachers.

Federal Student Aid (FSA) has started the [soft launch](#) of the 2024-25 FAFSA® form. During this time, the form will be available for periods of time over the coming days while FSA monitors site performance and responds to any potential issues. FSA will also be initiating pauses to the site, during which time the form will not be available while they conduct site maintenance.

If students/parents visit the site during a pause, they should check back later to access the form to complete their FAFSA®.

If you have scheduled a FAFSA® Completion event with LOSFA and want to reschedule your upcoming FAFSA Completion Workshop, please email losfa.scheduling@la.gov with your school/organization name, current FAFSA® Completion Workshop date/time, and at least two “new” date/time options. Our Events and Outreach Coordinator will work with you to reschedule your FAFSA® Completion Workshop.

Please contact losfa.counselors@la.gov or ldefinancialaid@la.gov for more information.

StudentAid.gov Account Creation for Individuals without a Social Security Number

Please share with principals, counselors, and teachers.

LOSFA has outlined a [process](#) to follow for an individual without an SSN to have their identity verified and a StudentAid.gov account created.

Please contact losfa.counselors@la.gov or ldefinancialaid@la.gov for more information.

USDA 1890 National Scholars Program

Please share with principals, counselors, teachers, and testing coordinators.

USDA's Office of Partnerships and Public Engagement (OPPE) manages the 1890 National Scholars Program, which is aimed at increasing the number of students from rural and underserved communities who study food, agriculture, natural resources and other related sciences. The scholarship provides recipients with full tuition, fees, books, room and board. Scholars attend one of the 1890 land-grant universities and pursue degrees in agriculture, food, natural resource sciences, or related academic disciplines.

For more information, please contact:

Dr. Tiffany Franklin, Southern University USDA Liaison, 301-974-7731
tiffany.franklin2@usda.gov

Dr. Jerrick L. Hornbeak, West Virginia USDA Liaison, 225-577-3447
Jerrick.hornbeak@usda.gov

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HiSet Data

Please share with principals, counselors, and teachers.

Due to data privacy and FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) limitations, school systems will need to request HiSet completion information directly from former students who earned their HiSet or their legal guardians. This is a difference from previous year processes.

Please contact your principal with questions.

\$5 ACT Test Registration Voucher

Please share with counselors.

ACT® is celebrating the crucial role of counselors by offering a [\\$5 test registration voucher](#), valid for an April, June, or July 2024 national ACT® test. This special gift, exclusively for counselors to distribute, is designed to enhance the vital connections they have with students by creating an opportunity for a unique touchpoint. Download the [customizable end-of-year cards](#) to access the voucher code and share this unique opportunity. **The voucher will be available until March 24.**

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov with questions.

Professional Opportunities

2024 Teacher Leader Summit

Please share with school system leaders, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

The 2024 Teacher Leader Summit is an annual professional learning conference that brings together Louisiana birth to grade 12 educators and content experts. Educators participating in the event will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the 2024-2025 school year. This year's [Teacher Leader Summit](#) will focus on our ability to lead the next level every single day. **School Counselors** are encouraged to attend, as several sessions within the Office of Career and College Readiness will be curated for their work streams. The [Teacher Leader Summit Overview](#) outlines the specifics of the Teacher Leader Summit.

- The TL Summit will take place from **May 28 - May 30, 2024** at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC) in New Orleans, LA.
- Registration for this event is now open, and is on a first-come, first-serve basis. As space is limited, it is **strongly encouraged** to register early.
- Registration Fees: \$175 (Early Bird; ends February 2, 2024); \$200 (Regular)

Please contact events@emergentmethod.com with questions.

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College Board Weekly Office Hours

Please share with principals, counselors, AP teachers, and testing coordinators.

The College Board is offering weekly office hours starting on August 8. Topics will include the AP 2024 exam schedule and digital AP exams. Please feel free to join the weekly discussion on any questions that you have about AP exams and resources.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Every Tuesday; 10 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** [Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)
- **Webinar ID:** 232 293 189 414
- **Passcode:** 7VQcYk

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov for more information.

College Board: Chat With A Coordinator

Please share with principals, counselors, teachers, and testing coordinators.

The College Board is offering a series of support opportunities for testing coordinators. [Registration](#) is now open for sessions being offered until **April 27**. These sessions will offer real-time support through small video chat led by experienced AP coordinators. Discussions range from preparing to submit an AP Exam order to creating optimal testing experiences for students in May. You may attend as many sessions as your schedule allows.

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov for more information.

Foundations of Open Educational Resources (OER) Cohort: Summer Professional Development Call for Applications

Please share with school system leaders, school administrators, school counselors, school librarians, and teachers.

LOUIS: The Louisiana Network, a program of the Board of Regents, is accepting applications to participate in a summer professional development cohort. Up to 20 school librarians and dual enrollment teachers from Louisiana public secondary schools will be selected and offered a payment of \$1,500 for successful participation in and completion of professional development activities. This summer 2024 (mid-May through June) professional development will occur virtually and largely asynchronously and will enable participants to gain fluency in Open Educational Resources (OER).

The deadline to apply is March 31.

[Details and the application](#) are now available. Contact alearningla@laregents.edu for more information.

Please contact timberly.deville2@la.gov with questions.

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Resources

Proposed Louisiana Counselor Rubric

Please share with school counselors.

The Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) is currently collecting feedback on the proposed [Louisiana Counselor Rubric](#). Counselors are asked to take time to review the rubric and provide [feedback](#) by March 11. Feedback will inform adjustments to the final rubric. During the 2024-2025 school year, systems may opt in to use the new evaluation system, including the Louisiana Counselor Rubric prior to full implementation in 2025-2026.

Please email compass@la.gov with questions.

Spring 2024 Counselor Institute Presentation

Thank you to all who attended the Spring 2024 Counselor Institute sessions, we truly enjoyed seeing everyone again! We hope you made great connections with the military branches, and consider them as a career option for your students!

As promised, the [presentation](#) is available for your review. Feel free to share as you deem appropriate. Dates for the Fall 2024 Counselor Institutes will be shared at a later date.

Please contact angela.jordan@la.gov with questions.

Office of Career and College Readiness February Monthly Call

Please share with school system leaders, secondary supervisors, principals, CTE supervisors, and high school school counselors.

Due to network connectivity issues, the Office of Career and College Readiness February Monthly Call was canceled. The [slide deck](#) is available for your review. Should you have any questions please reach out to the contact listed on the slide.

Please contact erica.spencer@la.gov with questions.

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FAFSA Fridays

Please share with principals, counselors, and teachers.

On Fridays, LOSFA team members will host several virtual StudentAid.gov (FSA ID) sessions throughout the day where students, parents, and counselors can join to receive assistance with creating a StudentAid.gov (FSA ID) Account. These sessions are open to classrooms or individuals.

[Register for FAFSA Fridays.](#)

Please contact losfa.counselors@la.gov for more information.

Jump Start Summers Application Webinar

Please share with CTE supervisors, administrators, and counselors.

A webinar walking participants through the Jump Start Summers Application process was held in February. If you were unable to attend, please see the Office of Career and College Readiness [call library](#) to access the presentation. The deadline to submit a Jump Start Summer Application is **March 18 at 5 p.m.**

Please contact timberly.deville2@la.gov with questions.

2023-2024 ACT® Counselor's Guide

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

ACT® is offering a **free** [Counselor's Guide for the 2023-2024 school year](#). The guide will provide information regarding national offerings of the ACT® test, tools and resources to help support students, season-based timelines for juniors and seniors, test preparation, and so much more.

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov with questions.

Top 10 ACT® Free Resources

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

ACT® has come up with a top 10 list of free resources for [counselors](#), [students](#), and [parents](#). The resources on each of these lists are ordered by popularity and include links to directly download the asset listed. Other free resources are the [ACT® Test Guide](#) and [Preparing for the ACT® eBook](#). These resources will deepen your understanding of the information students and parents are looking for as they think about high school life and the journey beyond.

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov with questions.

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Reminders

SCA Spring Reporting

Please share with CTE supervisors, secondary supervisors, school administrators and counselors.

The [SCA Portal](#) is still open for spring reporting for enrollments with Public Higher Education providers. The deadline to report is on **March 11** at 5 p.m.

Please contact sca@la.gov with questions.

Community Service Diploma Endorsement

Please share with school system administrators and counselors.

Students have the opportunity to earn 80 hours of community service during their high school years and earn the [Community Service Diploma Endorsement](#). Visit the [Diploma Endorsement webpage](#) for more information.

Please contact suzette.rabalais@la.gov with questions.

State Seal of Biliteracy

Please share with school system administrators and counselors.

Since the approval of RS 17:273.4 in 2024, Louisiana students may earn the State Seal of Biliteracy by demonstrating literacy in English and another language. Along with the [Diploma Order Form](#), school systems should submit the [Seals of Biliteracy Request Document](#).

High schools with at least 5% of their graduating class earning the Seal of Biliteracy will be celebrated at the **June BESE meeting**.

Please contact language.aquisition@la.gov with questions.

Proficiency by Exam/Portfolio

Please share with school system administrators and counselors.

Bulletin 741 §2314. Carnegie Credit and Credit Flexibility contains a policy concerning student's earning proficiency credit by exam or portfolio.

- Per policy, school systems must [report](#) exams/portfolios used to award credit by proficiency
- Students may only earn credit by exam or portfolio in a course in which **they have never been enrolled and received no formal instruction**

Contact stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions.

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Trauma Recovery Demonstration Grant

Please share with school system administrators and counselors.

Trauma Recovery Demonstration Grant Funding and Referral Deadline Reminders:

- Student referral deadline is April 30
- Grant funding ends September 30

Please contact traumarecoverygrant@la.gov with questions.

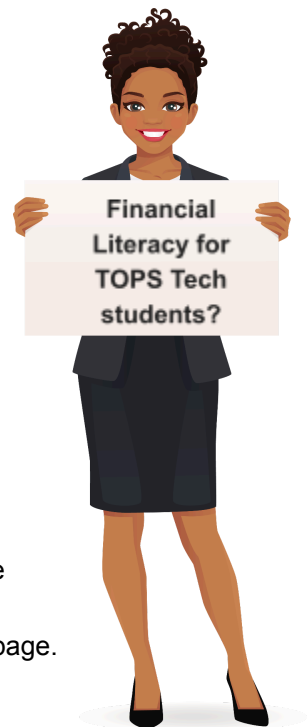
Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnect!

Q: Is Financial Literacy an acceptable course for my students on the JumpStart TOPS Tech diploma path?

- The "Unsure" Counselor

A: Financial Literacy is an acceptable math course for students on the Jump Start TOPS Tech diploma path. Also, please note that Financial Literacy will be a required course to meet graduation requirements starting with students entering grade 9 in 2024-2025. Ensure the STS transcript has a course code of 160345. You can find the [TOPS Tech](#) and [TOPS University](#) diploma course requirements on the LDOE [Graduation Requirements](#) webpage.



Scholarships/Funding Opportunities

[ScholarshipandGrants.us](#) (Great chart of responses for students who say "They won't qualify")

[Louisiana 811 Scholarship Program](#) (Deadline Friday, March 29)

[Amitie' Saving Lives Scholarship](#) (Deadline Sunday, March 31)

[Best Buy Scholarships](#)

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Connect With Our Office

Office of Career and College Readiness Contact Information

highschoolacademics@la.gov	General questions about the office and about graduation requirements
ldefinancialaid@la.gov	Questions related to the financial aid policy or for assistance with FAFSA completion
sca@la.gov	Questions related to Supplemental Course Allocation/Course Choice
jumpstart@la.gov	Questions related to Jump Start
healthyschools@la.gov	Questions related to healthy schools, healthy communities, and whole child
ppp@la.gov	Questions related to pupil progression

Monthly Calls

Child Welfare and Attendance Monthly Call	March 7 at 8 a.m.
Alternative Education Community of Practice	March 14 at 10 a.m.
Office of Career and College Readiness Monthly Call	March 21 at 3 p.m.
Healthy Communities Monthly Call	March 28 at 2 p.m.

Do you or a colleague need to sign up for the [Counselor Connect](#) newsletter? Please subscribe via the following [link](#).