



Counselor Connect



May 2026

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Student Opportunities

ACT Navigator - College & Career Planning for Families

Please share with system leaders, counselors, teachers, and students.

[ACT Navigator](#) is an online resource that allows students to navigate the path through high school and what lies ahead. Access includes:

- Timely and actionable steps from freshman through senior year, organized by season, to help students stay on track.
- Guidance for education and career - whether they are going to college or directly into the workforce.
- Majors and career exploration.
- Resources for college admissions, financial aid, testing advice, and alternative paths.

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

ACT - Upcoming Test Dates

Please share with system leaders, counselors, teachers, and students.

Below is the list of [upcoming National ACT test dates](#) and the [registration](#) deadlines.

<u>Test Date</u>	<u>Registration Deadline</u>	<u>Late Registration</u>	<u>Scores Released</u>
June 13	May 8	May 29	June 23
July 11	June 5	June 24	July 21

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



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Fast Forward

Standard and CTE Employment Certificates

Please share with CTE supervisors, administrators, WBL teachers, and counselors.

All students in work-based learning programs are required to hold an employment certificate. The specific type (Standard Employment Certificate vs. CTE Employment Certificate) is dependent on the nature of the opportunity.

Internships: Students work with an employer for a specified period of time to learn about a particular occupation or industry. Students must complete a 106.2 hours of on-the-job training and

must obtain a **CTE Employment Certificate**.

CTE Employment Certificates:

- Require termination date
- Completed and signed by: Training employer, parent/guardian, CTE Teacher/Coordinator, and student-trainee
- CTE Teacher-Coordinator completes and submits the electronic CTE Employment Certificate via the Louisiana Works website
- Prohibited occupations exemptions exist

How to become a CTE Employment Certificate Issuing Officer:

- The Superintendent or Principal sends an email to Youth Employment (youthemployment@la.gov) requesting training for the CTE Work Permit.
- Complete the LaWorks CTE Work Permit Training.

Cooperative Education (Co-Op): Students employed in a part-time job (e.g., retail, fast food, entertainment industry, etc.) must obtain a [Standard Minor Employment Certificate](#).

Standard Employment Certificates:

- No expiration date
- Application to employ a minor
- Completed and signed by: Employer representative, parent/guardian
- Prohibited occupations apply

Please contact laborprograms@la.gov with questions.

Industry-Based Credential Bundles Update

Please share with CTE supervisors, administrators, WBL teachers, and counselors.

Louisiana Works (formerly the Louisiana Workforce Commission) will lead the development of industry-based credential bundles. Bundle concepts will be shared with regional economic development organizations, LCTCS, and LDOE to validate workforce demand and ensure alignment with post-secondary pathways.



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Please note, school systems will not create or submit bundles themselves; however, they will play an important role in the process by recommending employer partners to LA Works for engagement. This approach is intended to ensure that bundles are responsive to employer needs, aligned with labor market demand, and provide students with a clear path from high school into training, postsecondary education, and career opportunities.

Please contact ibccouncil@lwc.la.gov with questions.

New Resource for CTE Teams: Louisiana Career Clusters Dashboard

Please share with CTE supervisors, administrators, WBL teachers, and counselors.

Louisiana Works has launched a new Career Clusters Dashboard to support program planning and career exploration. This tool organizes occupations by career cluster and provides key insights, including:

- Careers with each cluster
- Required education levels and skills
- Salary information and the top 10 occupations by median wage
- Annual job openings and projected growth

How to Access:

- Visit the [LaWorks Career Clusters](#) page
- Locate the “**New Louisiana Career Cluster Dashboard**” section and *Click Here*
- Choose a career cluster to explore
- Use the dashboard to toggle between clusters
- To view job openings and projected growth, adjust the bar on the right side of the top section

This is a valuable tool for aligning pathways to high-demand careers and supporting data-informed conversations with students and industry partners.

Please contact LMI@la.gov with questions.

Professional Opportunities

Spring 2026 Counselor Institute In-Person Sessions

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

Thank you to all attendees of the Spring 2026 Counselor Institute sessions! If you were unable to attend, you will find all handouts and the slide deck under the Counselor Institute tab on the [Counselor Support](#) page.

Please contact candace.joseph@a.gov with questions.



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2026 Fast Forward Training Catalog

Please share with school counselors, teachers, and CTE supervisors.

The [Fast Forward Training Catalog](#) lists available professional development and training opportunities. The catalog includes virtual, in-person, and hybrid training options for many Industry-Based Certifications (IBCs) on the State Focus List. Please be sure to check out the professional development offerings as they are updated regularly.

Please contact fastforward@la.gov with questions.

2026 ACT Summit

Please share with administrators, counselors, CTE supervisors, and testing coordinators.

[Registration](#) is currently open for the [2026 ACT Summit](#). The ACT Summit will be held on July 13-15 in Nashville, TN.

This event unites the expertise and focus of workforce professionals, higher-ed leaders, and K-12 leaders, creating a fully integrated experience that fosters cross-sector collaboration. Sessions are designed to spark collaboration, foster problem-solving, and shape the future of education and the workforce.

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

2026 AP Annual Conference

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

[Registration](#) is currently open for the [2026 AP Annual Conference](#). The conference will be held on July 22-24 in Las Vegas, NV.

This event brings together thousands of education professionals from the AP and Pre-AP communities. The conference schedule features workshops, content-driven sessions, and networking opportunities. Attendees will discover proven methods for increasing opportunities and access to the AP Program.

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

Call for Proposals: Louisiana ACT Regional Conference

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

ACT would like to invite educators and the workforce to [submit session proposals](#) for the 2027 Louisiana Regional Conference, scheduled for January 26, 2027, in Baton Rouge. Sessions should be 45 minutes, with priority given to sessions that are relevant to education and the workforce, such as:

- Innovative uses of ACT programs to boost outcomes
- Leveraging AI in the classroom
- Proven test preparation strategies
- K-12, higher education, and workforce partnerships
- Engaging parents and communities.



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The deadline to submit is **June 5**.

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

AP Participation Grant for Teachers

Please share with administrators, counselors, and AP teachers.

The College Board awards [AP Participation grants](#) for qualifying teachers to attend an AP Summer Institute (APSI). Requests are open until June or until all grants have been distributed. To qualify for the grant, you must:

- Be teaching a course for the first time in the 2026-2027 school year, or be teaching a course that has been revised for the 2026-2027 school year.
- Not receive professional learning funding from your school, district, or state.

The grant will cover tuition for College Board-endorsed APSI within the United States. All other costs will be the responsibility of the grant recipient.

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

Resources

LEADS Counselor Handbook

Please share with superintendents, human resource directors, school leaders, systems leaders, and counselors.

The [Louisiana Counselor Rubric and Evaluation Handbook](#) is now available in the [LEADS Library](#). This handbook provides examples to deepen understanding of the rubric indicators. Coaching questions and sample evidence are also included. Evaluators are encouraged to use this resource to assist with the counselor evaluation process.

Please contact leads@la.gov with questions.

Louisiana Education Loan Authority

Please share with administrators and school counselors.

The Louisiana Education Loan Authority (Lela) is Louisiana's nonprofit resource for free FAFSA completion assistance, college access, and affordable financing. It is a division of the Louisiana Public Facilities Authority (LPFA) — a nonprofit public trust established to provide financing assistance and benefits to the people of Louisiana.

The Lela team assists families with FAFSA-related questions through its FAFSA HELPLINE (844-463-2372) and [scheduled virtual appointments](#). Lela also offers a \$1,000 FAFSA Completion Scholarship and free resources for Louisiana high school counselors, students, and families, including a [FAFSA Completion Guide](#), a Parents' Guide to Planning and Paying for College, and a College Planning Checklist, available at www.lela.org.



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Please contact info@lela.org with questions.

Free ACT Practice Materials for Counselors

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

ACT is offering free [ACT practice materials for counselors](#). These materials will help counselors access the most useful materials. All materials can be shared with students to help with test prep, including practice tests and test guides.

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

LOSFA Outreach Events

Please share with administrators and counselors.

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance provides several outreach events, seminars, and workshops for schools, institutions, and organizations. These events can be delivered virtually and in person. Access the [Event Scheduling Guide](#) for more information about LOSFA Events, or submit requests using the [Event Request Form](#).

Please contact losfa.scheduling@la.gov with questions.

AP Resources for Counselors

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

The College Board offers [free counselor resources](#) needed to support and advise students on their journey to college and career. Resources include assistance with preparing specialized students, advising, [reference guides](#), handouts, and [counselor toolkits](#).

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

Reminders

America 250 Diploma Endorsement

Please share with administrators and school counselors.

America 250 is a national initiative created by Congress to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the United States in 2026. Each state, including Louisiana, has established its own commission to plan meaningful programs, recognitions, and events that honor America's past and inspire its future.

The America 250 seal will appear on the diplomas of Louisiana public high school graduates for the Class of 2026. The commemorative emblem honors both the nation's founding and the importance of preparing students to be informed, engaged citizens.

Please contact jenny.moran2@la.gov with questions.



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Financial Aid Planning

Please share with school system counselors and personnel who assist students with financial aid planning for postsecondary opportunities.

The 2026-2027 [Free Application for Federal Student Aid](#) (FAFSA) is now open to help students fund postsecondary education.

Students should complete the FAFSA if applying for the federal Pell Grant, federal student loans, the Louisiana GO Grant, and TOPS.

The TOPS application is on the LOSFA website if applying for TOPS only.

Please contact ldefinancialaid@la.gov with questions.

College Board Deadlines and Reminders

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

The College Board would like to remind school systems of upcoming deadlines.

- May 8: [AP Digital Portfolio](#) deadline for performance tasks in AP Art & Design.
- May 15: Deadline to order late-testing exams.
- May 31: Deadline for AP African American Studies project and AP Latin checkpoint scores for the [AP Digital Portfolio](#).
- June 1: Deadline for the College Board to [receive exam materials](#) from schools.
- June 15: Postmark deadline to return [AP Exam Invoices and Payments](#).
- June 20: Deadline for students to indicate or change the recipient of their [free score report](#).

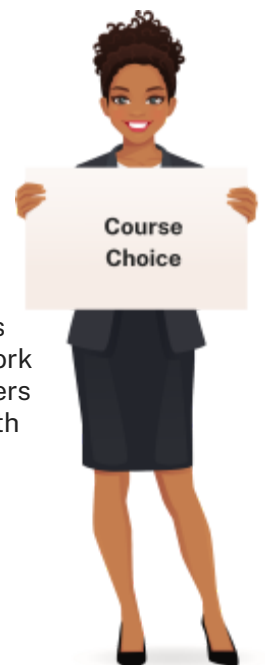
Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov with questions.

Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnnect!

Question: What is Course Choice, what is the impact, and what is the parents' role?

Answer: [Course Choice](#) is a program that provides public school students with access to various courses that may not be available at their school. It gives students access to courses to fulfill TOPS requirements, CTE, and Fast Forward programs, along with other academic work that is required for graduation. Parents receive information on approved courses and providers of Course Choice courses. Parents then sign off on selected courses to ensure they align with graduation, career plans, and their child's needs.





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Scholarship/Funding Opportunities

Scholarship awards can range significantly, from modest amounts, such as \$50-\$500, from local organizations to substantial sums, including full tuition, from larger institutions. Smaller scholarships, despite their lesser amounts, can be a great way to secure funding and often have fewer applicants.

[National Ocean Scholar Program](#) (Deadline: May 31, 2026)

[Hearts for Community Service](#) (Deadline: June 30, 2026)

[Regions Riding Forward Scholarship Contest](#) (Deadline: June 30, 2026)

[SEAFWA's Law Enforcement Chiefs' College Scholarship](#) (Deadline: July 1, 2026)

[Rockefeller State Wildlife Scholarship](#) (Deadline: July 1, 2026)

[College Board: Big Future Scholarships](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[SkillPointe Foundation Scholarship](#) (Deadline: Every Quarter)

[Home Depot Foundation's Path to Pro Scholarship](#) (Deadline: Last day of March, June, September, and December)

[Southern Foundation: Clyde and Carrie W. McHenry Endowed Scholarship](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[Southern Foundation: City National Bank Endowed Scholarship](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[Southern Foundation: Dow Alumni Scholarship Fund](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[SkillsUSA Member Scholarships](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education \(TEACH\) Grant](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[1st Financial Bank USA Financial Goals Scholarship](#) (Deadline: Monthly Drawing)

[LELA: \\$1,000 FAFSA Completion Scholarship Drawing](#) (Deadline: Varies)

[LELA: \\$1,000 Choose Louisiana Scholarship Drawing](#) (Deadline: Varies)



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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
coursechoice@la.gov	Questions related to Course Choice/Supplemental Course Allocation
fastforward@la.gov	Questions related to Fast Forward and Jump Start
healthyschools@la.gov	Questions related to healthy schools, healthy communities, and the whole child
ppp@la.gov	Questions related to pupil progression
transcripts@la.gov	Questions about duplicate high school transcripts for graduates

Monthly Calls

Alternative Education	No May or June Call
Office of Career and College Readiness	May 21 @ 3 p.m.
Safe and Healthy Schools	No May or June Call

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