

Applying for TOPS

Home study students can begin applying for TOPS their 12th grade year by either completing the TOPS Online Application or the **Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)**. <https://studentaid.gov/h/apply-for-aid/fafsa>

If you complete the FAFSA®, you do not have to fill out the TOPS Online Application to apply for TOPS.

The TOPS application deadline is July 1 following the one-year anniversary of high school graduation. For example, May 2023 graduates must submit an application no later than July 1, 2024, to receive TOPS funding.

The names of students who indicate they were home schooled on the FAFSA or the TOPS Online Application will automatically be submitted to the Louisiana Dept. of Education to verify their 11th and 12th grade home study status.

LOSFA also requires documentation regarding the student's 9th and 10th grade years before processing them for eligibility during the summer of the year they graduate from high school.

All documentation required to establish initial eligibility, including the 9th and 10th grade documentation, ACT scores, and citizenship/residency documentation, must be received by our office no later than the January 15th following the one-year anniversary of your high school graduation date. For example, May 2023 graduates must submit documentation by January 15, 2025.

Required Documentation

If the student ever attended a public and/or private high school for any part of their 9th and/or 10th grade year LOSFA requires a letter from the high school stating the dates of attendance and stating whether or not the student was in good standing at the time they left. Certification must be on the school's letterhead and signed by the principal, headmaster, or appropriate personnel at the high school previously attended. Certification can also be obtained from the school board office.

For students that were in a BESE approved home study program for 9th and/or 10th grade, LOSFA will need a copy of the 9th and/or 10th grade Home Study Approval Notification from the Louisiana Department of Education – BESE.

Students that attended a registered nonpublic school (not seeking state approval) for 9th and/or 10th grade can provide a copy of their Registration Confirmation from BESE or a letter from their home study administrator stating the student's dates of attendance.

Students are encouraged to begin submitting home study related documentation during their senior year, after completing the TOPS Online Application or the FAFSA. Home study documents can be submitted to LOSFA via e-mail at custserv@la.gov or mailed to LOSFA, Scholarship/Grant Division, P.O. Box 91202, Baton Rouge, LA 70821-9202.

ACT Eligibility Requirements

The ACT qualifying scores for home study students are:

- TOPS Tech – 19 (or 990 SAT)
- TOPS Opportunity – 22 (or 1100 SAT)
- TOPS Performance – 24 (or 1160 SAT)
- TOPS Honors – 28 (or 1300 SAT)

*NOTE: The ACT scores above are TOPS requirements. The achievement of these scores does not necessarily mean that you will meet the admission standards of the college of your choice since some schools require minimum ACT sub-scores for admission. You should contact the admissions office for the colleges to which you will apply to verify the ACT admission requirements for those schools.

Additional information regarding home study students can be found in our TOPS Q&A below. Additional questions can be emailed to TOPS.Homestudy@la.gov.

ACT Practice Quizzes: <https://quizme.act.org/>

ACT Study Guides: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/students-and-parents/high-school-success/popular-downloads.html>

ACT Online Practice: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-changes/online-testing/sample-questions.html>

ACT Registration: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration.html>

ACT Parkview Code: 192-804

ACT Fee Waiver Program: <https://www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/registration/fees/fee-waivers.html#:~:text=ACT%20Test%20Fees%20Are%20Covered,Free%20Additional%20Score%20Reports>

HOME-STUDY PROGRAM Q and A

Q-1. I am a home-study student. Can I receive TOPS, and, if so, are there any special requirements?

- A. Yes. The Louisiana Department of Education (LDE) must certify to LOSFA that you are a student who successfully completed the eleventh, if applicable, and twelfth-grade levels of a home-study program approved by the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE). If you ever enrolled in a Louisiana public high school or nonpublic high school or an approved non-Louisiana high school that was or has been approved by BESE, you must have successfully completed both the eleventh and twelfth grades of a home study program approved by BESE the student must begin the home study program no later than the conclusion of the 10th grade and the previously attended high school must provide LOSFA with certification that you were in good standing at the time you last attended that school. LOSFA may grant exceptions with regard to the requirement that a student begin a home study program no later than the end of the tenth-grade year. Students who meet the requirements for these types of exceptions must provide a Request for Exception Form to LOSFA along with the proper documentation for the exception. In addition, you must have an ACT score of at least 19 for TOPS Tech, 22 for TOPS Opportunity, 24 for TOPS Performance, or 28 for TOPS Honors, or an SAT score of at least 990 for TOPS Tech, 1100 for TOPS Opportunity, 1160 for TOPS Performance, or 1300 for TOPS Honors.

Q-2. I am a home-study student. How does LOSFA know that I am interested in applying for TOPS?

- A. Home-study students are identified by the high school code they entered on their ACT or SAT Registration. You should use the high school code 969999 on the ACT and 970000 on the SAT. These codes will cause your name to be placed on a list of students to be verified by LDE as being registered in an approved home-study program. If you complete the FAFSA, you will be asked, "When you begin college in the 2024-2025 school year, what will be your high school completion status?" If you mark "home schooled" after this question, LOSFA will include your name on the list sent to LDE if you have an ACT score of at least 19 or an SAT score of at least 990. If you complete the TOPS Online Application, you will be asked to name the high school you attended or that you were in a home-study program. If you answer "home study," LOSFA will include your name on the list sent to LDE if you have an ACT score of at least 19 or an SAT score of at least 990. Be sure that the name that you use on the ACT and the FAFSA exactly

matches your name on file with LDE. For example, if LDE records your name as John Q. Smith, your ACT and your FAFSA should use the name John Q. Smith, not John Smith, not John Quincy Smith, and not Quincy Smith. If your name differs in the slightest way in any of these documents, the determination of your eligibility for TOPS will be delayed. Your date of birth, home address, and email address must also be the same on all documents.