

**LOUISIANA STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE COMMISSION
OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE**

***Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)
Bulletin***

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TOPICS:	2021 Legislative Changes Impacting TOPS Scholarships

The 2021 Regular Legislative Session of the Louisiana Legislature concluded on Thursday, June 10, 2021, with the following changes to the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS):

[Act 95](#) - Beginning with the graduating class of 2020, allows students to utilize a qualifying score obtained on a national ACT test date in July immediately following high school graduation to qualify for TOPS. If a student qualifies for TOPS utilizing a test score achieved in June or July immediately following high school graduation, they will lose one full semester (or two quarters) of TOPS eligibility.

Act 95 also provides that LOSFA may grant exceptions with regard to the ACT deadline established in statute and 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. The following are the exceptions that may be granted in regards to the ACT Deadline and beginning a home study program no later than the end of the tenth-grade year:

- Extend the final ACT deadline for 2021 graduates if the student provides documentation that he was registered for an ACT test that occurred prior to high school graduation, but the test was canceled due to actions taken to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 or due to Hurricane Laura, Hurricane Delta, or Hurricane Zeta. The student must also document that he was unable to reschedule a test prior to the final deadline to achieve a qualifying score. Under these circumstances, students will not lose one semester (or two quarters) of TOPS eligibility.
- Allows LOSFA to grant exceptions to the final ACT deadline in future years, provided that the student must achieve a qualifying score on or before September 30 of the year of high school graduation. This provision requires that the student present circumstances that were beyond his control and which were attributable to the administration of the test. Circumstances would include,

but would not be limited to, hurricanes, flooding of the test site, etc. Under these circumstances, students will not lose one full semester (or two quarters) of TOPS eligibility.

- Allows LOSFA to grant exceptions to the requirement that a home study student begin such a program no later than the end of their tenth-grade year. LOSFA has received requests for exception to this requirement in the past due to circumstances including serious illness, severe bullying, and family relocation.

[Act 334](#) - Adds African American History as a course which may be used to satisfy the TOPS core curriculum requirement for social studies. Students will still be required to complete a course in American History and in American Government. African American History may be used to satisfy one of the two additional social studies courses for which a student must earn credit.

[Act 457](#) - Creates the M.J. Foster Promise Program. This program provides funds to students who are 21 years of age or older who are enrolled in a qualified program at a two-year public post-secondary institution or an accredited proprietary school licensed by the Board of Regents. This program will begin in the 2022-2023 academic year.

Reminder: [Act 346](#) of the 2020 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature delayed the implementation of the increased TOPS Core Curriculum GPAs required to qualify for a TOPS Performance (from a 3.00 to 3.25) or Honors Award (from a 3.00 to 3.50) until the graduating class of 2022.

Questions? Please contact custserv@la.gov or call (225) 219-1012.