

Louisiana Higher Education Financial Aid

Response to SR 138 of the 2024
Regular Legislative Session

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BOARD of REGENTS
STATE OF LOUISIANA

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Introduction

Senate Resolution 138 of the 2024 Louisiana Regular Legislative Session, sponsored by Senator Beth Mizell, urges and requests the Board of Regents (BOR) to conduct a study relative to the functioning of the state's higher education financial aid programs and to submit a report of findings and conclusions, including any recommendations for related legislation, to the House Committee on Education and the Senate Education Committee.

Five years ago, the Louisiana Board of Regents adopted *Louisiana Prospers*, its Master Plan for Higher Education, setting an audacious goal to support economic growth and strengthen quality of life in our state by increasing educational attainment among Louisiana's working-age population (ages 25–64) to 60% by 2030. This number not only represents an ambitious target, but also provides a roadmap to a future in which Louisiana's residents fully benefit, in both their work and lives, from all the advances of our technology-rich, knowledge-driven world.

Our pursuit of the *Louisiana Prospers* goal has resulted in Louisiana's educational attainment level for 25-64-year-olds breaking 50% for the first time – reaching its current all-time high of 51% in 2024. While there is significant work left to accomplish, we have successfully strengthened our education pipeline and continue improving alignment to Louisiana's workforce needs. Looking at the younger members of Louisiana's working-age adults, the news is encouraging. For 25–34-year-olds, Louisiana's attainment rate reached a record level of 51.5% in 2022, a percentage that stands as the highest educational attainment rate for that age group among our regional state neighbors, including Alabama, Mississippi, Tennessee, Arkansas, Oklahoma, and Texas. Accelerating this success requires us to ensure that education in Louisiana is attainable and affordable.

As such, a comprehensive and effective suite of state financial aid programs is critical to meeting the state's attainment goal. In Academic Year (AY) 2024, Louisiana's largest state-supported financial aid programs assisted almost 100,000 students, but significantly more students in our state could benefit from college-going assistance programs.

This study seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the programs identified for review – TOPS, M.J. Foster Promise, GO Grant, Geaux Teach and the Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship Program. This report provides background information on those state scholarship and grant programs, defines barriers, and analyzes the intersection of these programs with other student financial assistance to further the success of Louisiana's students. Maximizing the financial assistance programs that assist students in attaining postsecondary education and analyzing the interconnection of these programs are critical to the state and our students.

SR 138 requires that the report include, at minimum, the following:

- (1) Explanation of any barriers that prohibit eligibility for these programs.
- (2) Strategies to align the eligibility criteria for each financial assistance program in ways that enable them to work together more effectively.
- (3) Strategies to align the eligibility criteria for each financial assistance program with the Louisiana Board of Regents' minimum admission requirements and the state's college and career-ready definition.
- (4) Recommendations for legislation, if any, necessary to remove barriers or otherwise, improve the functioning and utilization of financial assistance programs for Louisiana's students.

This report provides an evaluation of state-supported financial assistance programs with a goal of ensuring that they work together effectively to benefit the students and, ultimately, the state as we focus on improving the education and employment of our citizens.

Background

SR 138 (2024) specifies that the following financial assistance, scholarship, and grant programs be considered: TOPS, M.J. Foster Promise, GO Grant, Geaux Teach and the National Guard Patriot Scholarship. For each program we summarize the purpose of the program, how the dollars can be used, and any citizenship or residency requirements. All scholarship awards are subject to legislative appropriations by the Louisiana Legislature.

- **TOPS Opportunity, Performance, and Honors (TO, TP, TH):** A program of state merit-based scholarships for Louisiana residents who attend either one of the state's public colleges and universities, approved Proprietary and Cosmetology Schools, or institutions that are a part of the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU).
 - The TOPS award amount is determined based on tuition levels during the 2016–17 academic year, together with Performance or Honors stipends as appropriate. These dollars can be used towards the cost of attendance.
 - An awardee must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and meet Louisiana residency requirements.
- **TOPS Tech (TT):** Offered to qualified high school graduates, and providing up to two years of skill or occupational training to be pursued at an accredited Louisiana postsecondary institution that offers a vocational or technical education certificate/diploma ([Approved-Schools-Final.pdf](#)).

- The TOPS award amount is determined based on tuition levels during the 2016–17 academic year. These dollars can be used towards the cost of attendance.
- An awardee must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and meet Louisiana residency requirements.

- **TOPS Tech Early Start (TTES):** This program provides grants for Louisiana residents who are dually enrolled in high school and pursuing technical or applied courses or training in high-demand fields. The program's purpose is to encourage high school juniors and seniors to complete credentials in top-demand jobs.
 - TOPS Tech Early Start pays \$50 per credit hour, not to exceed \$300 for up to six credit hours per semester or \$600 per academic year.
 - TOPS Tech Early Start pays tuition but does not cover fees or other costs of attendance.
 - An awardee must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and a Louisiana resident.

- **M.J. Foster Promise Program:** Offers grants to adult students pursuing degrees/credentials for high-demand jobs ([M.J. Foster Update 10.14 by LOSFA CASC - Infogram](#)).
 - The M.J. Foster Promise Program is available to all eligible Louisiana residents 20 years or older, with individual student awards based on eligibility and enrollment. Qualified students receive financial support to earn credentials aligned with high-demand jobs in five approved industry sectors, construction, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, and transportation and logistics.
 - The original program covered the cost of tuition and required fees after all other sources of aid were applied excluding student loans and federal work-study (MJFP Award Information). This is known as a last-dollar program; however, Act 284 of the 2023 Legislative Session allows the scholarship to be used before all other sources of aid for an eligible student's first semester of support, covering tuition, fees, books and/or instructional materials (This is known as a first-restricted dollar provision).
 - The original program covered students who were 21 years and older. Act 633 of the 2024 Legislative Session reduces the age threshold by one year each year until it reaches 17 in 2027–28.
 - This program allows a student to be enrolled full-time or part-time at a public or approved proprietary institution.
 - An awardee must be a U.S. citizen and a Louisiana resident.

- **Louisiana GO Grant Program:** Provides state-funded need-based aid for Pell Grant (federal need-based aid) recipients with remaining unmet cost of attendance (COA) needs.
 - The Louisiana GO Grant is a state program that assists students who can demonstrate financial need in paying for the cost of postsecondary education. The GO Grant is used to support a portion of the costs of attending an eligible Louisiana institution. These dollars can be used towards the COA, a standard definition that includes tuition, fees, books, transport and living expenses.
 - The award is between \$300 and \$3,000 currently.
 - An awardee must be a U.S. citizen or permanent resident and a Louisiana resident.

- **Geaux Teach:** Provides financial assistance to students in teacher preparation programs approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE); funding is also available to students attending certified alternative teacher preparation programs approved by BESE.
 - The maximum annual award is \$5,000.
 - Geaux Teach shall be applied only to tuition, fees, textbooks, and instructional materials required for enrollment. The award shall be used only after all other state or institutional financial aid and awards are applied (last dollar program) and only for any remaining balance due for tuition, required fees, textbooks and instructional materials required for the course of study (State Financial Aid Bulletin, August 23, 2024).
 - Students enrolled in an undergraduate program must be enrolled full-time.
 - Students enrolled in the alternate certification program may be enrolled part-time or full-time.
 - An awardee must be a U.S. citizen and a Louisiana resident for at least two years prior to the award.

- **Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship Program:** Provides payment of mandatory fees for recipients of the National Guard Tuition Waiver.
 - The Patriot Scholarship program works with the State Tuition Exemption Program (STEP) to help Louisiana Army Soldiers and Air National Guardsmen working towards an undergraduate degree.
 - This program allows for the payment of mandatory fees charged to the student by the institution as funds are appropriated.
 - The program requires that the student be enrolled in at least one credit hour at a Louisiana public postsecondary institution, serving part-time and full-time students.
 - An awardee must be a member in good standing of the Louisiana National Guard.

Figure 1 provides further information on the state-supported financial assistance programs requested in this study resolution.

Figure 1. LOSFA Programs Overview

Currently Funded Programs	Program Overview	Part Time/ Full Time	Prior-Year Statistics (FY 2023–24)			Current Year Appropriation (FY 2024–25)
			Participant Type	Total # Served	Actual Total Dollars	
TOPS - Taylor Opportunity Program for Students	Merit-Based Aid - scholarship program; award levels Include: Opportunity, Performance, and Honors	Full Time	Undergraduate	49,906	\$278,849,558	\$297,106,275
	TOPS Tech – scholarship for occupational training	Full Time	Undergraduate			
	TOPS Tech Early Start – grants for CTE dual enrollment	Up to 6 credit hours.	High School Dual Enrollment			
M.J. Foster Promise Program	Grant to adult students pursuing degrees/credentials for high-demand jobs	Full & Part Time	Undergraduate	3,026	\$9,967,079	\$10,500,000
Louisiana GO Grant	Need-Based Aid - grant program	Full & Part Time	Undergraduate	35,838	\$70,475,646	\$70,480,716
Geaux Teach	Students in teacher preparation programs	Full Time	Undergraduate	428	\$966,632	\$2,500,000
			Alt. Cert.	112	\$197,053	
Patriot Scholarship	Payment of mandatory fees for recipients of National Guard tuition waiver	Full & Part Time*	Undergraduate	2,252	\$3,329,935	\$3,700,000

Source: LOSFA Board Presentation August 2024

Currently, the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA), a program of the Louisiana Board of Regents, administers all of the state's financial assistance programs. LOSFA advances college access by 1) promoting educational programs, such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and college application completion, and serving as the state's expert source of information on financial assistance; 2) preparing students for college success by

providing intensive and comprehensive college and career advising; and 3) providing financial assistance and related support services by administering the state's scholarship and grant programs (https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/WhoIsLOSFA_Report.pdf).

Current Status

To provide context, the following section offers a brief historical overview of each scholarship program listed above, including eligibility and renewal criteria, award information, total program costs, and number of recipients. The legislation that created these programs spans almost 28 years, from 1997 to the present. Over this period, the landscape of higher education has changed significantly, as have the needs and demographics of the students.

This study comes at a time when postsecondary education, financial aid, college costs, student behavior, and demographics are in great flux. Increasingly, financial assistance programs are not just about paying tuition but also providing comprehensive support for students to succeed. A key focal point of this report is to examine the elements of these scholarship programs and explore how they can be amended or combined to maximize benefits for students while reducing reliance on student loans to cover educational costs. Additionally, the report will analyze how these scholarships can be bundled to cover student costs as campuses package financial assistance.

TOPS

Act 1375 of the 1997 Regular Legislative Session created the Tuition Opportunity Program for Students, subsequently renamed the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS). The first college freshman class to receive TOPS awards entered postsecondary education in the fall of 1998.

From the 1998-99 through the 2023–24 fiscal years, the state has provided more than \$5 billion in funding for the TOPS Program. Figure 2 (below) provides the total funding for all TOPS scholarships since inception.

Figure 2. TOPS 1998–2024

Award ▼	Student Counts ▼	Total Paid ▼
OPH	413,504	\$4,977,434,139.45
1 - Opportunity	222,832	\$1,984,093,192.05
2 - Performance	112,722	\$1,601,685,259.57
3 - Honors	76,950	\$1,391,655,687.83
Tech	24,536	\$70,607,210.12
4 - Tech	24,536	\$70,607,210.12
TTES	34,305	\$9,063,303.42
5 - TOPS Tech Early Start	34,305	\$9,063,303.42
Total	472,345	\$5,057,104,652.99

Source: [Who Is LOSFA Report.pdf \(la.gov\)](#)

The Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and TOPS Tech eligibility criteria include completing a defined high school core curriculum with a minimum grade point average (GPA) in core courses and a minimum ACT composite score. Table 1 lists the current eligibility criteria and award components for all TOPS awards. Currently, the TOPS Core Curriculum consists of 19 units. The specific course requirements of the TOPS Core Curriculum can be found here: [TOPSCoreCurriculum.pdf](#).

With the adoption of the 2001 Master Plan, BOR assumed the TOPS Core as the Regents' Core, the most critical element of the minimum standards for admission to the state's public four-year colleges and universities. The TOPS/BOR Core currently consists of four units of coursework, each in English, Math, Natural Science, and Social Science, two units in Foreign Language, and one unit of study in Fine Arts. TOPS academic eligibility criteria require students to take this 19-hour core curriculum to prepare them for success after high school, particularly in postsecondary education.

In 2023, Act 276 raised the 19-hour core curriculum to 20 hours, adding Financial Literacy as a required course. This change will begin with the high school graduating Class of 2028 ([TOPSCoreCurriculum2027.pdf](#)).

TOPS eligibility is determined by using the high school transcript from the Louisiana Department of Education's Student Transcript System (STS) and official composite ACT scores. The Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or the TOPS Online Application are the two mechanisms for applying for TOPS. Table 1 provides a summary of TOPS eligibility criteria and award duration.

Table 1. TOPS Eligibility Criteria and Award Duration

Award	Core Units	Core GPA	ACT Composite	Duration
Opportunity	19	2.50	Prior-year state average, currently 20	4 years or 8 semesters
Performance	19	3.25	23.0	4 years or 8 semesters
Honors	19	3.50	27.0	4 years or 8 semesters
TOPS Tech	21 Jump Start Career Path Core Units	2.50	17 or higher or a silver-level score on the assessments of the ACT WorkKeys system	2 years

Source: LOSFA website - TOPS Brochures & Flyers

To maintain eligibility, TOPS and TOPS Tech recipients must be continuously enrolled as full-time students, earn at least 24 semester hours each academic year (fall, spring, and summer), and maintain satisfactory academic progress as demonstrated by the cumulative grade point average. LOSFA determines continuing eligibility based on data from the postsecondary institution where the student is enrolled. Table 2 lists the minimum renewal requirements for each award.

Table 2. TOPS Minimum Renewal Requirements

Award	Hrs. Earned per Academic Year	Cumulative GPA for Continuation	Award Reinstated* (Upon recovery of required GPA)
Opportunity	24	2.30 after 24 credit hours earned 2.50 after 48 credit hours earned Maintain steady academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes
Performance	24	3.00 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes, Opportunity
Honors	24	3.00 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes, Opportunity
TOPS Tech	24	2.5 after 24 credit hours earned Maintain satisfactory academic progress at the end of all other terms (2.00 TOPS cumulative GPA)	Yes
*Achievement of the required GPA must occur within two years for Opportunity, Performance, and Honors and within one year for TOPS Tech			

Source: LOFSA website - TOPS Brochures & Flyers

In terms of the demographics of TOPS recipients, Tables 3 and 4 indicate that TOPS recipients are predominantly White and predominantly female. In 2022–23, White students comprised 70.5% of TOPS recipients in the first-time entering freshman student population.

Table 3. Percent TOPS Recipients by Race (TH, TP, TO, TT)

HS Cohort	Asian	African American	White	Hispanic	Other	Not Reported	Total
2012–13	2.9%	19.0%	73.9%	2.6%	1.5%	0.1%	100%
2013–14	3.0%	18.2%	73.7%	2.9%	1.7%	0.5%	100%
2014–15	3.0%	18.8%	73.4%	3.0%	1.6%	0.2%	100%
2015–16	2.9%	19.2%	72.8%	3.2%	1.6%	0.2%	100%
2016–17	2.9%	18.7%	73.1%	3.3%	1.8%	0.2%	100%
2017–18	3.0%	19.9%	71.4%	3.3%	2.1%	0.2%	100%
2018–19	2.9%	19.3%	71.9%	3.5%	2.2%	0.2%	100%
2019–20	3.1%	17.8%	72.9%	3.8%	2.3%	0.1%	100%
2020–21	3.3%	16.0%	74.1%	3.9%	2.4%	0.2%	100%
2021–22	3.5%	17.4%	71.8%	4.4%	2.6%	0.2%	100%
2022–23	3.4%	18.1%	70.5%	5.0%	2.9%	0.2%	100%

Source: LOSFA

Table 4. TOPS Recipients by Gender

HS Cohort	Female		Male		Total*
2012–13	10,447	58.8%	7,310	41.2%	17,757
2013–14	10,677	58.8%	7,466	41.1%	18,144
2014–15	10,833	59.0%	7,514	41.0%	18,347
2015–16	10,488	59.0%	7,290	41.0%	17,778
2016–17	10,597	58.7%	7,451	41.3%	18,051
2017–18	11,361	58.4%	8,082	41.6%	19,445
2018–19	10,976	58.1%	7,923	41.9%	18,905
2019–20	10,277	58.6%	7,244	41.3%	17,524
2020–21	9,277	57.2%	6,930	42.8%	16,208
2021–22	9,147	57.4%	6,776	42.6%	15,924
2022–23	9,049	57.2%	6,768	42.8%	15,821

* This analysis includes 21 individuals who did not report their gender.

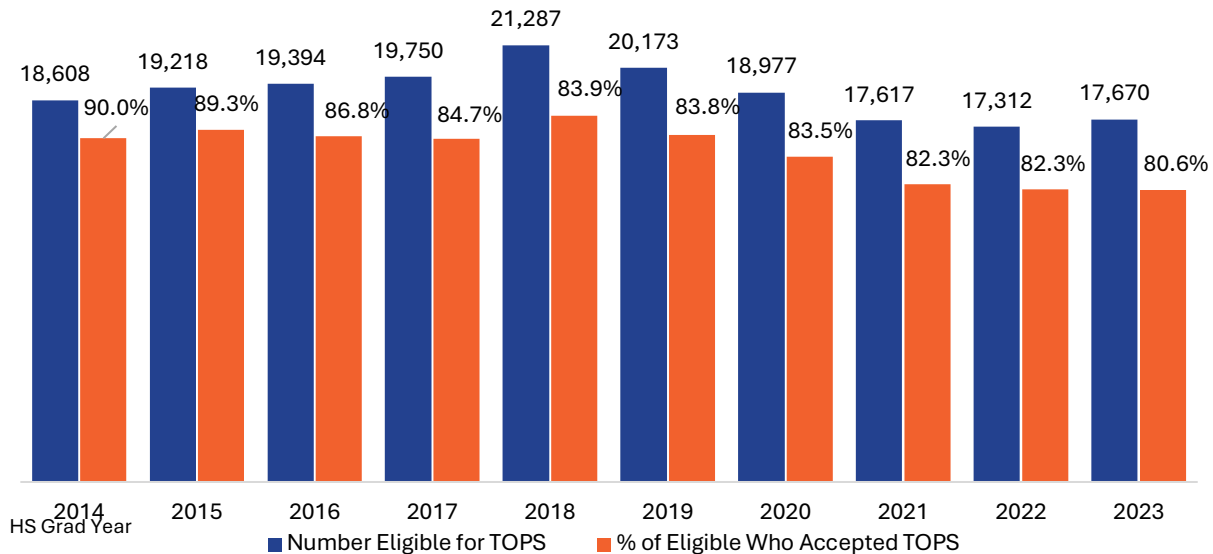
Source: LOSFA internal data files as of July 2024

A generally accepted purpose of TOPS is to attract and retain graduates of Louisiana high schools who are more likely to persist and attain a postsecondary credential. A common slogan associated with the TOPS Program has been “to retain the best and brightest” students to attend Louisiana's colleges, with the hope that they will enter the state's workforce after graduation.

To that end, of the 190,006 students deemed eligible for TOPS Opportunity, Performance, or Honors between 2014 and 2023, 161,060 (84.8%) accepted the award and enrolled in a postsecondary education institution in Louisiana (see Figure 3). For TOPS Tech, 66,336 students were eligible, and 15,087 (22.7%) accepted the award.

The percentage of students who accept TOPS Opportunity, Performance, or Honors awards and enroll in college has been steadily declining since 2018. The most recent rate of 80.6% is the lowest in ten years.

Figure 3. Number Eligible for TOPS vs. Percent of Eligible who Accepted and Enrolled in Postsecondary Education Institutions in Louisiana by High School Graduation Year (TH, TP, TO)



Source: LOSFA July 2024

The number of students eligible for TOPS awards and the proportion of those eligible who choose to accept each type of award have been trending downward since 2018 (see Table 5).

Table 5. TOPS Acceptance Rates

HS Grad Year	Tech	Opportunity	Performance	Honors
2011–12	22.3%	91.4%	92.8%	84.2%
2012–13	26.7%	90.6%	92.7%	84.0%
2013–14	26.7%	90.6%	93.3%	84.3%
2014–15	23.2%	89.6%	92.9%	84.2%
2015–16	17.8%	86.6%	91.1%	81.9%
2016–17	22.7%	84.8%	89.4%	79.1%
2017–18	24.6%	83.6%	88.2%	79.4%
2018–19	25.4%	83.2%	88.1%	79.9%
2019–20	23.4%	83.1%	88.4%	78.7%
2020–21	23.3%	83.2%	86.6%	76.0%
2021–22	20.6%	83.2%	86.3%	75.3%
2022–23	20.0%	81.9%	84.5%	73.2%

Source: LOSFA

To further understand these phenomena, LOSFA and Regents conducted an in-depth analysis of those students who were eligible for any TOPS award between 2015 and 2022 but chose not to accept it. In this analysis, we utilized data from the National Student Clearinghouse together with enrollment data collected from Louisiana public and proprietary institutions. Together, these data paint a much more detailed picture of the post-high-school choices of eligible students who elected not to accept their TOPS award.

These data allowed us to see whether students who chose not to receive their TOPS award enrolled in universities and colleges in other states (Table 6) or enrolled in a Louisiana institution despite not accepting the available TOPS funds (Table 8). In compiling these data, we also confirmed whether students were enrolled in any short-term or industry-recognized credential programs, public or proprietary, in Louisiana.

First, we analyzed the out-of-state enrollment of TOPS-eligible students. Table 6 shows the proportions of students who chose not to accept the TOPS award and left the state for college. The results show that Louisiana’s best students are opting to leave the state at higher rates. In fact, for those eligible for TOPS Performance or Honors, the proportion leaving the state has been steadily climbing.

Table 6. Proportion of TOPS Non-Acceptors Going Out-of-State

YEAR	OPPORTUNITY	PERFORMANCE	HONORS	TECH
2014–15	35%	61%	74%	9%
2015–16	32%	53%	77%	8%
2016–17	37%	61%	81%	11%
2017–18	38%	57%	75%	10%
2018–19	34%	74%	80%	10%
2019–20	32%	58%	77%	10%
2020–21	40%	64%	85%	12%
2021–22	39%	68%	83%	11%

The Clearinghouse data allow us to not only understand enrollment patterns but also to see which institutions TOPS-eligible students chose to attend. Table 7 below shows the most commonly chosen out-of-state options.

Table 7. Out-of-State Institutions Chosen by TOPS-Eligible High School Graduates

Out-of-State Institution	High School Graduation Year								TOTAL
	2014–15	2015–16	2016–17	2017–18	2018–19	2019–20	2020–21	2021–22	
U. of Southern Mississippi	61	75	145	172	209	139	119	139	1059
U. of Alabama	40	45	80	62	63	69	110	110	579
U. of Mississippi	35	45	45	56	59	68	78	111	497
Mississippi State U.	30	36	62	63	65	54	79	66	455
Spring Hill College	35	49	46	37	41	31	27	29	295
Millsaps College	23	35	30	44	34	42	49	37	294
U. of Arkansas at Fayetteville	14	10	22	29	35	28	47	83	268
Baylor U.	24	21	27	35	39	35	29	26	236
Southern Arkansas U.	19	16	32	32	47	23	31	23	223
Mississippi College	19	22	29	30	33	19	39	31	222

Many students eligible for TOPS Tech, the scholarship program for students pursuing a vocational or technical education certificate or diploma, who chose not to accept their award elected nevertheless to enroll in a public, private, or proprietary university or college in Louisiana (Table 8). In 2022, 54% of students who were eligible to receive TOPS Tech did not accept those funds but chose to pursue a postsecondary education in Louisiana. While roughly 100 earned an industry-based credential through a short-term training program and some enrolled in college part-time, the overwhelming majority chose to enroll in an academic program that was not TOPS-Tech-eligible at either a two- or four-year institution. Almost 700 students enrolled part-time, almost 2,000 enrolled in four-year institutions, and a further 440 enrolled in two-year institutions in academic programs not on the TOPS Tech eligibility list. Of note, the TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Tech programs do not support part-time student enrollment.

Table 8. Proportion of TOPS Non-Acceptors who Enrolled in Louisiana

Year	Tech	Opportunity	Performance	Honors
2014–15	79%	40%	17%	7%
2015–16	80%	42%	23%	8%
2016–17	75%	40%	19%	7%
2017–18	64%	28%	17%	5%
2018–19	59%	27%	14%	3%
2019–20	63%	27%	14%	4%
2020–21	58%	19%	9%	2%
2021–22	54%	13%	4%	2%

In 2021–22, 184 students who were eligible to receive a TOPS Opportunity, Performance or Honors award, the scholarship program for students pursuing a degree at a two-year or four-year Louisiana postsecondary institution, chose not to accept their award but nevertheless enrolled in a Louisiana institution (Table 8). Of these, 73 enrolled part-time. Of the remaining 111 students, 21 enrolled in private institutions, 54 enrolled full-time in public four-year institutions, and 36 enrolled full-time in public two-year institutions.

TOPS Tech Early Start (TTES)

TOPS Tech Early Start (TTES) was created by Act 348 of the 2005 Regular Legislative Session and implemented in the 2005–06 Academic Year (AY). TTES was established as part of the TOPS program for eligible 11th- and 12th-grade high school students attending Louisiana public high schools. This award can be used at an approved Louisiana public postsecondary institution to pursue an industry-based occupational or vocational education credential (https://mylosfa.la.gov/wp-content/uploads/ttes_eligible_programs.pdf) via dual enrollment as defined by BOR, provided the program meets the following criteria:

- Identified by the Occupation Forecasting Conference as a credential for an occupation in top demand in Louisiana; and
- Recognized by the Louisiana Industry-Based Certification Council; and
- Approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) and the Board of Supervisors of the Louisiana Community and Technical College System.

Table 9 provides the specific eligibility, renewal, and award information for TTES.

Table 9. TOPS Tech Early Start Program

Eligibility	Continuing Eligibility	Award Amounts
Be in good standing as defined by the high school.	Remain in "Good Standing" as an 11 th - or 12 th -grade student in a Louisiana public high school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ The TOPS Tech Early Start Award provides a payment not to exceed \$300 for up to six credit hours each semester or \$600 each academic year (college) at a rate of \$50 per credit hour. ▸ The TOPS Tech Early Start Award is limited to 6 credit hours per semester and 12 credit hours each academic year (college). TOPS Tech Early Start is not payable for summer semesters or sessions.
Have an approved 5-year Education and Career Plan.	Maintain a 2.00 GPA on a 4.00 scale on all high school courses attempted.	
Have a cumulative GPA of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale on all courses attempted.	Continue to pursue one or more courses leading to a credential in an Eligible Program.	
Score a 15 or above on the mathematics AND English portion of the Pre-ACT or the ASPIRE, the ACT, the equivalent concordant value on the SAT, or a Silver Level score on the ACT WorkKeys assessment.	Remain in "Good Standing" with the public or non-public college or approved training provider.	
Enroll in a course in an industry-based occupational or vocational education credential program in a top-demand occupation (Eligible Program).	Maintain steady academic progress.*	

***Source:** Louisiana Administrative Code §301; Steady Academic Progress—the maintenance of a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.00 on a 4.00 scale, except at eligible cosmetology or proprietary schools, where it is meeting the federal grant aid requirement for steady academic progress at that school.

TOPS Tech Early Start aims to incentivize qualified Louisiana public high school students to prepare for and pursue an approved industry-based occupational or vocational education credential in a top-demand occupation while still in high school. The Occupation Forecasting Conference (OFC) identifies a Top-Demand Occupation as being in high demand in Louisiana and recognized by the State Industry-Based Certification Leadership Council (Louisiana Administrative Code, April 2019). The OFC projects job growth and develops information on the needs of current, new, and emerging industries for the workforce development planning process at statewide and regional levels (Eligible Training Provider [ETP] Manual: laworks.net).

The TOPS Tech Early Start award provides up to \$600 per academic year for any eligible 11th- or 12th-grade student attending a Louisiana public high school who wishes to concurrently enroll (dual enroll) for up to six credit hours per semester to pursue certification in an [Eligible Program subject category](#) at a public or non-public college or an Approved Training Provider.

An Approved Training Provider is defined as a Louisiana provider recognized by the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) and approved by the state Board of Elementary and Secondary Education to offer technical and/or applied courses toward a credential in a top-demand occupation (Louisiana Administrative Code, April 2019). ETPs are approved for federal funding under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (2014, U.S. Congress). The LWC is responsible for enforcing federal labor standards and promoting workers' well-being (Eligible Training Provider Manual: laworks.net).

Additionally, as demonstrated in Figures 4 and 5, currently the majority of providers are clustered in the Southeast area of the state, with a few outliers in the northern and southwestern parts of the state, which precludes access to available programs in which students can enroll. The majority of students are enrolled at Northshore Technical Community College. Figure 4 outlines the student participation information.

Figure 4. TOPS Tech Early Start Enrollments 2023–2024

AWARD TYPE System / College	TOPS TEACH EARLY START		
	Students	Tuition	Total Paid
Training Provider	38	\$22,800	\$22,800
New Orleans Career Center	38	\$22,800	\$22,800
LCTCS	1,578	\$381,600	\$381,600
SOWELA Technical Community College	30	\$11,950	\$11,950
South Louisiana Community College (Main Campus)	12	\$3,000	\$3,000
River Parishes Community College (Main Campus)	57	\$14,850	\$14,850
Northshore Technical Community College	1,002	\$211,050	\$211,050
Northwest Louisiana Technical Community College (Main Campus)	44	\$15,100	\$15,100
Louisiana Delta Community College (Main Campus)	33	\$11,600	\$11,600
Nunez Community College	222	\$67,650	\$67,650
Delgado Community College (Main Campus)	15	\$3,150	\$3,150
Central Louisiana Technical Community College (Main Campus)	27	\$9,950	\$9,950
Baton Rouge Community College (Main Campus)	4	\$1,000	\$1,000
Bossier Parish Community College	132	\$32,300	\$32,300
Total	1,606	\$404,400	\$404,400

Source: LOSFA website

The approval process for becoming an approved TTES provider consists of an application submitted by the provider; LDOE reviews the applications to ensure alignment to the LWC state focus list and validates that the provider is approved through the Louisiana Workforce Commission (LWC) Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) program; LDOE then interviews the applicants to ensure the vendor objectives align to TTES goals; and once the applicant meets the requirements, they are presented to the BESE for approval. All providers are brought for BESE

approval each year for the subsequent school year. Figure 5 shows the providers that are approved for the 2025–26 academic school year.

Figure 5. TOPS Tech Early Start Providers for the 2025–2026 Academic Year

Training Provider Organization	Training Program and Credential	Course Modalities	Region
ABC Pelican Chapter Associated Builders & Contractors	Construction Industry: •Various Certifications	Face-to-Face	Greater Baton Rouge Region
Ayers Career College	Software Development Industry: •CompTIA A+ •CompTIA Network+ •Phlebotomy Technician	Face-to-Face & Blended Learning	Caddo Bossier Claiborne DeSoto
Monroe Electrical Joint Apprenticeship & Training Committee (JATC)	Architecture & Construction Industry: •Electrical Training ALLIANCE Interim Credentials	Face-to-Face & Blended Learning	Ouachita
New Orleans Career Center	Health Sciences Industry: • Basic Life Support for Health Care Workers (BLS, CPR) •Certified Medical Administrative Assistant (CMAA) Engineering & Manufacturing & Industry: •AutoDesk Inventor Software Development Industry: •Fundamentals of JavaScript, Functional Programming, & Web Development (Level 1) •Fundamentals of JavaScript, Functional Programming, & Web Development (Level 2) •Fundamentals of JavaScript, Functional Programming, & Web Development (Level 3)	Face-to-Face & Blended Learning	Orleans
Operation Spark	Information Technology: •Fundamentals of JavaScript, Functional Programming, & Web Development (Level 1) •Fundamentals of JavaScript, Functional Programming, & Web Development (Level 2) •Fundamentals of JavaScript, Functional Programming, & Web Development (Level 3)	Face-to-Face & Blended Learning	Orleans St. Tammany St. Charles St. Bernard

Source: <https://www.louisianabelieves.com/courses/tops-tech-early-start-training-providers> and [TOPS Tech Early Start Training Providers; TOPS Tech Early Start Jan2025](#)

Table 10 below provides a 12-year snapshot of TTES funding, total awards dispensed, and gender breakdown. While the program has begun to rebound in recent years, it is certainly underutilized and there are opportunities to partner with stakeholders to increase the approved providers and enrollment.

Table 10. TOPS Tech Early Start Program

Year Cohort	Cost	# of Students	Female	Male	Not Reported
2023–24	\$403,400.00	1,616	34.00%	36.40%	26.60%
2022–23	\$462,300.00	1,765	36.70%	37.70%	25.60%
2021–22	\$298,300.00	1,231	38.20%	34.80%	27.00%
2020–21	\$220,300.00	918	13.30%	17.60%	69.10%
2019–20	\$548,575.00	2,037	17.80%	13.90%	68.30%
2018–19	\$555,400.00	2,251	14.30%	9.80%	75.90%
2017–18	\$826,650.00	3,384	12.70%	10.50%	76.80%
2016–17	\$953,650.00	3,862	14.00%	13.00%	73.00%
2015–16	\$869,678.42	3,703	8.30%	7.60%	84.10%
2014–15	\$1,093,950.00	4,481	4.80%	3.02%	92.20%
2013–14	\$1,220,450.00	5,439	5.10%	2.74%	92.20%
TOTAL	\$7,452,653.42	29,071	18.11%	17.01%	64.62%

Source: LOSFA Website

In general, dual enrollment participation has increased significantly statewide, with 2023–24 seeing a record total enrollment of 36,265 high school students. Additionally, the number of African American students increased by 1,100 compared to last year. However, high school participation in career technical courses sits at only 20% of the total courses, an area in need of growth. While the TTES program funds only technical community college courses in specific fields and certain programs, the potential to use these funds to increase student access is significant, given the difference between enrollment today compared with the early years of its implementation. In addition, the impact of dual enrollment on our *Louisiana Prospers* Master Plan initiatives cannot be overstated. This year, the percentage of on-time high school graduates with college credit or industry credentials earned while in high school increased to 74%, a proof point of success as we work to promote early college opportunities.

The TTES program is a small, underutilized program with significant potential for future growth. Challenges with the utilization of the program appear to include lack of knowledge about the program, inability to braid the funding since only specific courses and students are eligible, and absence of mechanisms to identify eligible students and courses for the program. In addition, the administration of the TTES program also has unique challenges, such as the vetting process for providers, which can potentially take a year. The dearth of approved providers and complicated processing could be why high schools choose to use MFP Supplemental Course Allocation (SCA) dollars rather than TTES funding to support high school dual enrollment CTE programs.

M.J. Foster Promise Program

Act 457 of Louisiana's 2021 Regular Legislative Session created Louisiana's adult financial aid program. Named for former Louisiana Governor Murphy J. "Mike" Foster, this legislation established a \$10.5 million annual state fund to provide workforce training opportunities for the state's working-age adults who have not yet earned a postsecondary credential.

The purpose of the program is to provide financial assistance to eligible students enrolled in two-year public postsecondary institutions and accredited proprietary schools approved by the Board of Regents to pursue an associate's degree or a short-term credential aligned with Louisiana's workforce priorities. The M.J. Foster Promise Program began in academic year (AY) 2022–23.

The award amount of \$3,200 per award year, or \$1,600 per semester, is provided to a student enrolled full-time. Part-time students receive a proportional amount. Students can receive a maximum of \$6,400 over three years. A student may receive the maximum award of \$6,400 in one year for specific high-cost programs ([MJFP Award Information](#)).

Award recipients must pursue an associate's degree or shorter-term postsecondary credential tied to specific high-demand, high-wage occupations aligned to Louisiana's workforce priorities. The program funds enrollment in approved priority majors related to growing industry sectors, including construction, healthcare, information technology, manufacturing, transportation, and logistics (the complete list is available at [MJFP Approved Programs](#)). Initially, the Board of Regents established an Advisory Council and identified the qualified programs that provide the high-value credentials this program supports. The Louisiana Workforce Commission (Act 102 (2024)) is now charged with the convening responsibility for the Council.

The M.J. Foster Promise Program is critical in helping to reach the goal outlined in the Board of Regents Master Plan, *Louisiana Prospers*, of 60% credential attainment for the state's working-age population by 2030. With the growth of participants and completers in the program, the MJFP award provides financial support for students to complete their education and training to

earn high-demand credentials, ultimately contributing to a significant influx of working-age adults needed for high-value positions in Louisiana's economy.

Tables 11 and 12 outline the eligibility and continuing requirements for the M.J. Foster Promise Program.

Table 11. M.J. Foster Promise Program: Eligibility Requirements:

Eligibility Requirements	Details
Age Requirement	Be at least 20 years old when completing the application (Legislation passed in 2024 to stagger the lowering of the age limit each year)
Education	Have a high school diploma or equivalent, or co-enroll in a recognized program and earn a high school credential
Citizenship/Residency	Must be a U.S. citizen and a Louisiana resident (living in Louisiana for 24 months prior to completing FAFSA). Veterans must establish residency within 24 months after discharge
Previous Education	Cannot have an associate's degree or higher
Application	Complete the M.J. Foster Promise award application
FAFSA	Complete the FAFSA
Veteran Status	Have received an honorable or general discharge under honorable conditions
Admission Requirements	Meet the institution's admission requirements
Enrollment	Remain enrolled in an eligible program through specified dates (e.g., 14 th class day)
Post-Completion Agreement	Agree to live and work full-time in Louisiana for at least one year after completing the program
Additional Requirements	Must not: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be imprisoned • Have been convicted of a violent crime

Source: LOSFA Website

The original program eligibility requirements are as follows: applicants must be Louisiana residents (21 years or older) and meet a family income threshold of 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)¹ or be unemployed or underemployed for six months. The awards are available on a first-come, first-served basis and accessible to the student for three years. The original program

¹ A measure of income issued annually by the Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) determines eligibility for specific programs and benefits such as Medicaid. The 2024 income number of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for an individual is \$15,060, and for a family of four is \$31,200. [Federal Poverty Level \(FPL\) - Glossary | HealthCare.gov.](#)

covered the cost of tuition and required fees after all other sources of aid had been exhausted (excluding student loans and federal work-study [MJFP Award Information](#)); however, Act 287 of the 2023 Legislative Session allows the scholarship to be used before all other sources of aid in an eligible student's first semester of support. Continuing eligibility requirements are detailed in Table 12.

Table 12. Continuing Eligibility Requirements: M.J. Foster Promise Program

Continuing Requirements	Details
FAFSA Submission	Annually complete the FAFSA if enrolled in a Title IV-eligible program
Application Renewal	Annually complete the online application for the M.J. Foster Promise Program award
Academic Progress	Make steady academic progress in the program
Academic Standing	Remain in good academic standing at the enrolling institution
Continuous Enrollment	Maintain continuous enrollment unless granted an exception
Cumulative GPA	Maintain a minimum 2.00 GPA on a 4.00 scale for programs with letter grades
Non-Letter Grade Programs	Maintain steady academic progress in programs without letter grades
Incarceration/Conviction	Cannot be incarcerated or have a violent crime conviction
Violent Crime Exception	Those not incarcerated but convicted of a violent crime are ineligible
Veteran Status	Veterans must have received an honorable or general discharge under honorable conditions
Award Duration	Cannot receive the award for more than three consecutive academic years unless granted an exception
Credit Hour Cap	Cannot use the award to earn more than 60 college credit hours
Post-Completion Continuation	Can continue receiving the award after completing a program other than an associate's degree if the student: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meets all continuing eligibility requirements • Has not exceeded the \$6,400 maximum limit • Has not received the award for more than three years

Source: LOSFA Website

Act 287 (2023) provides that the initial award payment is to be applied before any federal, state, and institutional aid is applied but limits the award to tuition, fees, and mandatory books and instructional materials costs ("first restricted dollar"). The Act also retains the requirement for "last-dollar" application for subsequent award payments and specifies that federal financial aid first applied to educational expenses shall not include funding from student loans, work-study, or the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

Multiple pieces of legislation approved in the 2024 Regular Legislative Session made substantive changes to the M.J. Foster Promise Program.

Act 102 made the following additional changes to MJFP:

- Increased the maximum amount that may be appropriated to \$40 million. Note that this increase only allows for a maximum appropriation; it does not require it.
- The Louisiana Workforce Commission shall call the Advisory Council rather than the Board of Regents.

Act 633 gradually reduces the minimum eligibility age for the M.J. Foster Promise Program from 21 to 17 years of age. This reduction in the minimum eligibility age will take place in a graduated manner over four years, as follows:

- For the 2024–2025 award year, an applicant must be 20 years or older;
- For the 2025–2026 award year, an applicant must be 19 years or older;
- For the 2026–2027 award year, an applicant must be 18 years or older; and
- For the 2027–2028 award year and thereafter, an applicant must be at least 17 years old.

Table 13 provides the age ranges for the MJFP recipients as of academic year 2023–24. The majority of recipients are in the 30–39 age range with 84% of MJ Foster recipients under 40 years of age.

Table 13. Age Ranges for MJFP Funding Recipients, 2023–24

Age Range	Headcount	Percent
21–24	848	28%
25–29	768	25%
30–39	943	31%
40+	479	16%
TOTAL	3,038	100%

Source: LOSFA's MJFP Recipient File, as of 07/25/2024

In terms of the demographics of M.J. Foster participants, Table 14 provides race and gender information for recipients in 2023–24. The MJFP recipients who benefited most from this funding were Black Non-Hispanic females (56%) and males (11%), who comprised 67% of the total percentage of recipients, by far the highest of all represented ethnicities.

Table 14. Race by Gender for MJFP Funding Recipients, 2023–24

Race	Female		Male		Gender Not Reported	Total	Percent of Total
	Count	Percent of Total	Count	Percent of Total	Count		
Black, Non-Hispanic	1,695	56%	338	11%	9	2,042	67%
White, Non-Hispanic	416	14%	110	4%	5	531	17%
Hispanic	60	2%	12	0%		72	2%
Asian	214	7%	24	1%		238	8%
American Indian or Alaskan Native	11	0%	3	0%	1	15	0%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	11	0%	3	0%		14	0%
Two or More Races	43	1%	8	0%	2	53	2%
Race/Ethnicity Unknown	54	2%	12	0%	7	73	2%
Grand Total	2,504	82%	510	17%	24	3,038	100%

Source: LOSFA [Microsoft Power BI](#)

For the 2023–24 award year, 10,878 applicants were evaluated for eligibility to receive program funds. Of the total applicants, 6,807 were eligible, 1,938 were ineligible, 773 were cancelled, and five withdrew. Cancellations and withdrawals consisted of students who voluntarily withdrew for various reasons, such as were not enrolled in an approved program, were not enrolled during the award year, or did not adhere to enrollment deadlines. In total, \$9,777,519 was dispersed to students in Year Two, compared to \$2,709,984 to students in Year One. Table 15 provides the total cost, number of students, and gender breakdown from the program's inception. The growth trend and popularity of this program is continuing to increase, resulting in scholarship demand outpacing available funding.

As of February 2025, 4,523 have already been supported by the program in the 2024–25 academic year – more students than were supported in the first two years combined. In part, this is because of legislative approval to utilize funds that were not expended in the first year during this current fiscal year to address the backlog in requested funding.

Table 15. M.J. Foster Promise Award

Year Cohort	Cost	# of Students	Female	Male	Not Reported
2023–24	\$9,777,519	3,024	76.10%	20.50%	3.50%
2022–23	\$2,709,984	1,171	75.50%	23.30%	1.20%
TOTAL	\$12,487,503	4,195	75.80%	21.90%	2.35%

Source: LOSFA [Microsoft Power BI](#)

While many of those students who received funds are still pursuing their credentials, last year 1,276 were able to complete within the second year of the award. The law allows a student to earn several stackable credentials in a qualified program. In total, the 1,276 recipients in 2023–2024 completed 1,480 credentials. In terms of areas of program interest, almost 1,000 students earned credentials in the Healthcare field, and 300 more credentials were earned in Transportation and Warehousing.

In addition to the analysis of this year’s cohort, we were also able to examine the financial impact of post-MJFP employment for the 2022–23 cohort. That analysis shows that prior to participating in the MJ Foster program the median earnings of participants was \$19,026. Following program participation, on average the credential earned enabled a completer to increase their salary by more than \$20,000.

Louisiana GO Grant Program

The GO Grant program was created by BOR and implemented with state financial support through an MOU in 2007. It was enacted into law by Act 655 of the 2010 Regular Session. This program aims to provide a need-based component to the state's financial aid offerings to support non-traditional and low- to moderate-income students who need additional aid to afford the cost of attending college at an eligible Louisiana institution.² Table 16 provides GO Grant eligibility, renewal requirements, and award amounts.

Table 16. GO Grant Eligibility, Renewal Requirements and Award Amounts

Eligibility	Renewal	Award Amounts**
Be a Louisiana resident*	Must file a FAFSA or Renewal FAFSA annually	Minimum Annual Award = \$300
File a FAFSA		
Receive a Federal Pell grant	Continue to receive Pell Grant	
There is a remaining financial need after deducting the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) and all federal/state/institutional grants or scholarship aid ("gift aid")# from the student's Cost of Attendance (COA).	Have remaining financial need after deducting the Estimated Family Contribution (EFC) and all federal/state/institutional grants or scholarship aid ("gift aid")# from the student's Cost of Attendance (COA).	Maximum Annual Award = \$3,000
Be a student enrolled in an eligible Louisiana institution on at least a half-time basis (minimum 6 hours at semester school or 4 hours at a quarter school).	Meet Satisfactory Academic Progress (SAP) for Title IV aid. The award can be renewed for subsequent years to a maximum lifetime award that correlates to the Federal Pell Grant.	

* **Residency:** Louisiana resident as of the day the FAFSA is filed, and Louisiana is the student's actual and fixed domicile as reported on the FAFSA. If the student's state of residence on the FAFSA is not reported as Louisiana, but a dependent student claims that a non-custodial parent is a Louisiana resident or that parents are Louisiana residents living out of state, LOSFA will determine residency based on the completion, by the parents, of a residency affidavit.

** Award amounts to eligible students are based on the institution's allocation and packaging policy. Awards may vary with each academic year. Awards will not be paid for summer sessions, quarters, or terms.

Examples of gift aid include Federal Pell Grant, Federal SEOG, TOPS, TOPS stipends, and institutional scholarships.

² **Source:** LOSFA Website: [Go Grant | Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance](#)

The GO Grant assists students who can demonstrate financial need to afford the cost of postsecondary education. The minimum grant award is \$300, and the maximum award is \$3,000. Campuses apply the GO Grant amount to eligible students based on their own packaging policies with no set amount applied to each eligible student. To fully fund all 62,243 eligible students with the current financial aid packaging policy, an additional \$75.1M is required; to fully fund all 62,243 eligible students at the maximum GO Grant award amount of \$3,000 per student, an additional \$122 million is needed.

The GO Grant is used to pay a portion of the remaining cost of attendance at an eligible Louisiana institution after the student applies all federal/state/institutional grant or scholarship aid ("gift aid") from the student's cost of attendance. It is a last dollar program.

Tables 17 and 18 provide the cost, number of GO Grant enrollees, and gender breakdown from 2015–16 through 2023–24.

Table 17. GO Grant Information, 2015–2024

Year Cohort	Cost	# of Students	Female	Male	Not Reported
2023–2024	\$70,442,479.00	35,876	54.40%	27.10%	18.50%
2022–2023	\$55,343,081.90	33,483	53.80%	27.20%	19%
2021–2022	\$40,377,615.00	29,850	52.90%	26.10%	21%
2020–2021	\$29,308,107.83	24,631	52.20%	24.60%	23.20%
2019–2020	\$28,417,696.00	23,445	49.20%	24.80%	26%
2018–2019	\$28,310,890.00	25,490	46.90%	23.90%	29.10%
2017–2018	\$26,356,231.00	23,191	46.10%	23.50%	30.40%
2016–2017	\$26,374,396.00	25,002	44%	22.70%	33.30%
2015–2016	\$26,458,019.50	26,877	42.50%	23.80%	33.70%
TOTAL	\$331,388,516.23	247,845	49.11%*	24.86%*	26.02%*

* = Average

Source: LOSFA [Microsoft Power BI](#)

Table 18 provides the numbers of enrollees by ethnicity. From 2015–16 to 2023–24, the program primarily assisted African American students (37.3%), with White students at 29%.

Table 18. GO Grant Recipients by Ethnicity

Year Cohort	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiple Races	White	All Others*	Not Reported	Total
2023–2024	13,523	894	1,469	539	11,667	188	7,596	35,876
2022–2023	12,484	799	1,243	447	10,843	185	7,482	33,483
2021–2022	11,014	611	1,044	355	9,580	167	7,079	29,850
2020–2021	9,371	473	741	240	7,482	138	6,186	24,631
2019–2020	8,869	362	548	191	6,893	110	6,472	23,445
2018–2019	9,288	450	562	157	6,816	116	8,101	25,490
2017–2018	8,735	377	520	139	5,821	96	7,503	23,191
2016–2017	9,465	474	461	112	5,875	77	8,538	25,002
2015–2016	9,934	487	524	105	6,482	94	9,251	26,877
TOTAL	92,683	4,927	7,112	2,285	71,459	1,177	68,208	247,845
*All others=American Indian or Alaskan Native; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island; Unknown								

Source: LOSFA [Microsoft Power BI](#)

Geaux Teach Scholarship Program

Act 463 of the 2022 Regular Session enacted the Geaux Teach Scholarship Program, which was implemented in academic year 2022–23. The Geaux Teach Program provides scholarships to students enrolled in teacher preparation programs or alternate certification programs approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) at postsecondary institutions within the state. Table 19 provides information on eligibility, renewal, and award amounts for the Geaux Teach Program.

The maximum \$5,000 annual award for the Geaux Teach program is applied only to tuition, fees, textbooks, and instructional materials required for enrollment. This scholarship is a last-dollar program that is awarded after all state and institutional financial aid is applied.

Since its inception, the Geaux Teach Scholarship has been underutilized. As a last-dollar scholarship, funds are only disbursed to students after all other financial aid has been applied. This restriction prevents many eligible students from accessing the scholarship, when their tuition, fees, textbooks, and instructional materials are already covered by other forms of aid.

This leaves the Geaux Teach Scholarship unavailable to them despite still facing unmet financial need in other areas of their cost of attendance.

Table 19. Geaux Teach Program

Eligibility	Continuing Eligibility	Award Amounts
Be a United States citizen and, if required, registered with the Selective Service.	Have received the award for not more than four academic years and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸The maximum award amount is \$5,000 for the academic year. The scholarship can be used for the summer term. ▸Geaux Teach scholarships shall be awarded after all state and institutional financial aid are applied.
Be a Louisiana resident for at least two years prior to July 1, immediately preceding the academic year of enrollment.	Maintain a minimum cumulative college GPA of at least 2.50 and	
Have at least a 2.50 cumulative college grade point average.		
Be enrolled full-time in an approved teacher preparation program or alternate certification program.	Maintain full-time enrollment in an approved, alternative certified teacher education program through the census date.	

Source: <https://mylosfa.la.gov/students-parents/scholarships-grants/louisiana-geaux-teach-program/>

Tables 20 and 21 provide the cost, number of student enrollees, and gender breakdown from the program's inception to 2023–24 academic year.

Table 20. Geaux Teach Scholarship Program

Year Cohort	Cost	# of Students	Female	Male	Not Reported
2023–24	\$965,478.82	428	368	57	3
2022–23	\$664,358.68	317	275	40	2
TOTAL	\$1,629,837.50	745	643	97	5

Source: LOSFA Microsoft Power BI

Table 21 provides the number of enrollees by ethnicity. In the first two years, the program primarily assisted White students, at 70%, followed by African American students, at 11.2%.

Table 21. Geaux Teach Recipients by Ethnicity

Year Cohort	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiple Races	White	All Others*	Not Reported	Total
2023–24	71	2	14	9	515	1	41	745
2022–23	43	2	14	5	225	2	26	317
TOTAL	114	4	28	14	712	3	67	1,012

*All Others = American Indian or Alaska Native

Source: LOSFA [Microsoft Power BI](#)

Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship

The Patriot Scholarship program was enacted by Act 279 of 2023 and was implemented in academic year 2023–24. This program awards scholarships to Louisiana National Guard members enrolled in Louisiana public postsecondary institutions and eligible for Louisiana National Guard tuition assistance.³

This program provides for the payment of mandatory fees charged to the student by the institution. In FY 2024–25, the Patriot Scholarship was appropriated \$3.7 million.

Table 22 provides information on eligibility, renewal, and award amounts for the Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship program.

³ The Army and Air Force National Guard (ARNG) Federal Tuition Assistance program provides financial assistance to drilling Guard members. 100% of tuition up to \$250 per semester hour, up to 16 semester hours annually; not to exceed \$4,000 per fiscal year; lifetime limit of 130 undergraduate hours; lifetime limit of 39 graduate hours; lifetime limit of 21 certificate/diploma hours; may be used with the Post-9/11 GI Bill or Montgomery GI Bill (MGIB)-Active Duty for the same course. [National Guard Tuition Assistance | Military.com](#)

Table 22. Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship Eligibility and Award Amounts

Eligibility	Continuing Eligibility	Award Amounts
Be a member in good standing of the Louisiana National Guard	Be a member in good standing with the Louisiana National Guard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ The award amount is equal to mandatory fees charged, as evidenced on the student's fee bill ▸ The postsecondary institution shall determine the award amount for eligible students
Be eligible to receive the Louisiana National Guard tuition waiver	Be eligible to receive the Louisiana National Guard tuition waiver as of the school's census date	
	Not have received the scholarship for more than 12 semesters or 16 quarters	
Be enrolled in a minimum of one credit hour or more at a Louisiana public postsecondary institution	Not be on academic probation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▸ Eligibility for the Award is 12 semesters or 16 quarters ▸ Part-time enrollment in summer sessions counts towards the maximum number of semesters or quarters
	Not receive the scholarship for more than four years unless granted an extension due to mobilization or call to active duty	
	Not achieve a baccalaureate degree utilizing the funds for the program	

Source: <https://mylosfa.la.gov/students-parents/scholarships-grants/louisiana-national-guard-patriot-scholarship/>

Table 23 provides the cost, number of student enrollees, and gender breakdown for the first year of the program.

Table 23. Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship

Year Cohort	Cost	# of Students	Female	Male	Not Reported
2023–24	\$3,599,693.26	1,469	37.30%	51.40%	11.30%

Source: LOSFA [Microsoft Power BI](#)

Table 24 provides the numbers of enrollees by ethnicity. In its first year, the program has primarily assisted African American students (38%), followed by White students (33.4%) and Hispanic students (5%).

Table 24. Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship Recipients by Gender

Year Cohort	African American	Asian	Hispanic	Multiple Races	White	All Others*	Not Reported	Total
2023–24	558	31	75	12	491	8	294	1,469

*All Others = American Indian or Alaskan Native; Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Island

Source: LOSFA [Microsoft Power BI](#)

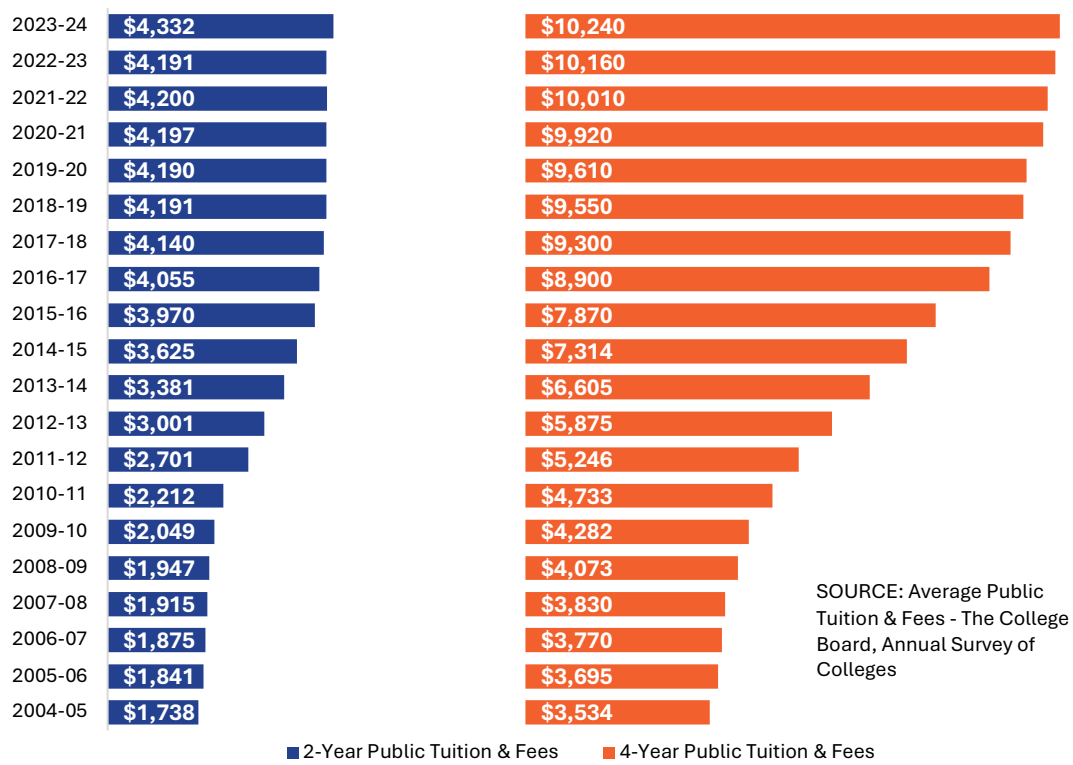
Barriers and Challenges

With the context of the specific scholarship and grant programs in this study established in the previous section, it is imperative to critically and transparently assess any challenges and barriers to participation in these aid programs. To support this analysis Regents engaged with LOSFA, members of the financial aid community, and higher education leaders from all four systems. We were also selected and sent a team to a State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) Community of Practice that was focused on student borrowing. In the following sections, we provide information regarding three large-scale barriers that hinder the effectiveness of the state’s financial aid programs.

Rising Costs of Postsecondary Education

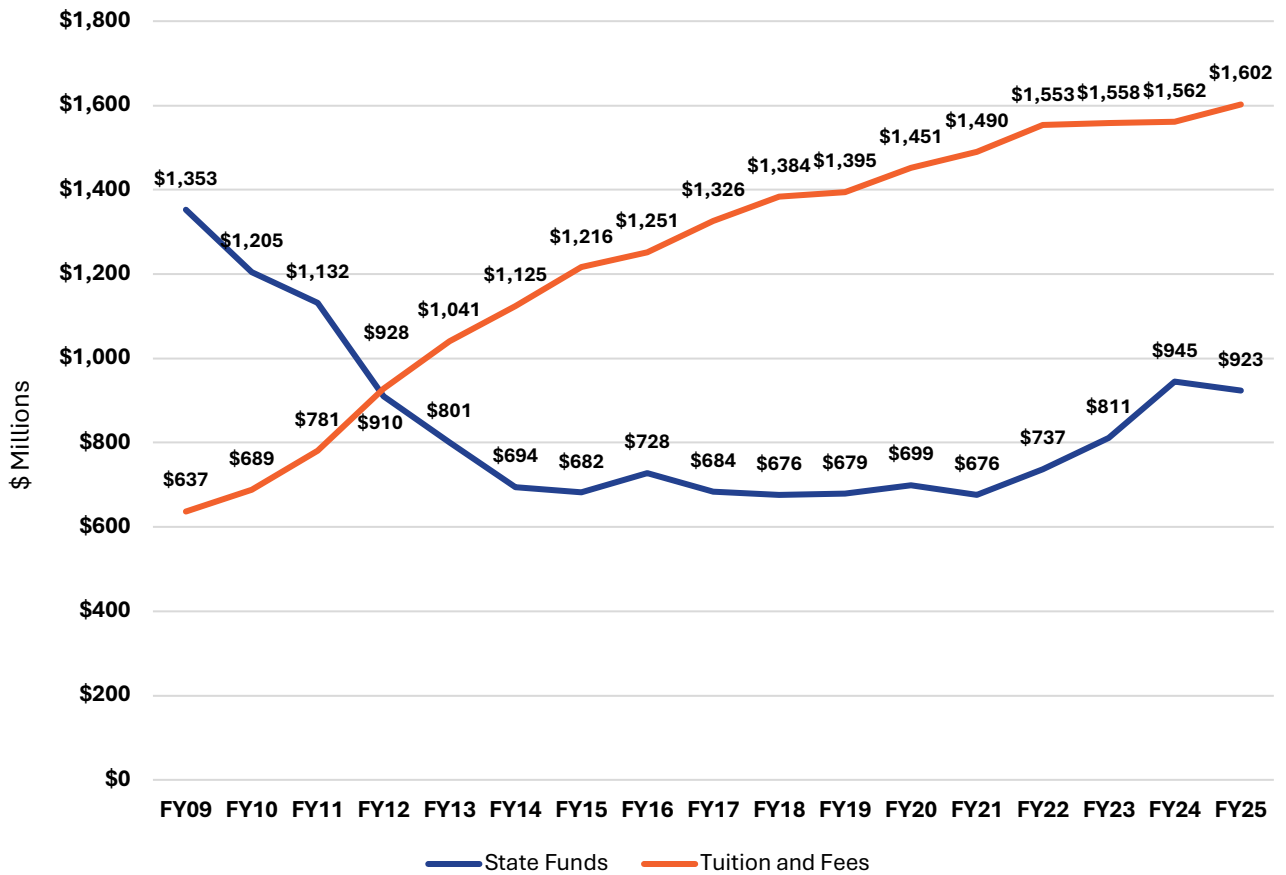
Understanding current trends in college costs is crucial for accurately assessing the financial landscape of higher education. Nationally, the average cost of college tuition and fees at public four-year institutions has risen 141% over the last twenty years, for an average annual increase of 7% (Hanson, 2024). In Louisiana (2024 TOPS Report), while tuition costs have remained stationary in recent years, average tuition and fees combined for both two- and four-year institutions have increased yearly since 1998–99 (see to Figure 6). State law requires a two-thirds vote of the Louisiana Legislature to increase tuition and/or select fees at two-year and four-year public postsecondary institutions. Fees assessed by a vote of the student body are an exception to this law.

Figure 6. Average Tuition and Fees for LA Public Two- and Four-Year Institutions



In Louisiana, a significant decrease in state support for higher education at the beginning of the last decade has made state support per full-time-equivalent student (FTE) almost the lowest in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states (see Figure 7). This has produced an even more significant increase in the cost of higher education to Louisiana’s families of more than 250% since 2004.

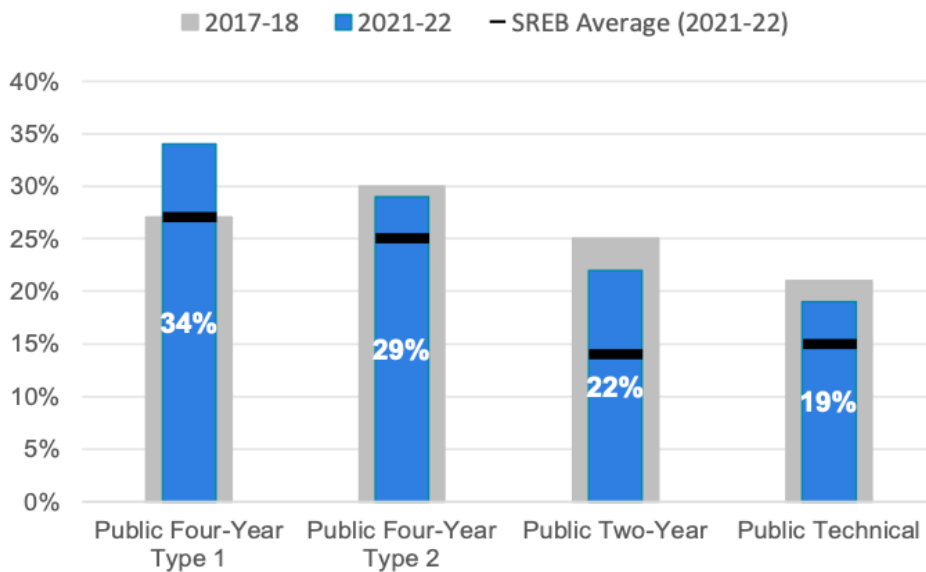
Figure 7. Louisiana Degree-Granting Institutions Funding: State Funds vs. Tuition & Fees Revenue Change



Source: SREB College Affordability Profile of Louisiana

The Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) compiles information regarding higher education financing and performance across the sixteen southern states in the compact to improve public education at every level, from pre-K through Ph.D. The sixteen states included in the SREB (www.sreb.org) are: Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and West Virginia. SREB’s 2024 College Affordability Profile of Louisiana shows that the percentage of family income required to pay for higher education in Louisiana is far above the SREB average (Figure 8). While this is true for both four- and two-year institutions, the difference is particularly pronounced for two-year institutions, which serve as Louisiana’s open admission institutions.

Figure 8. Percentage of Average Family Income Required to Pay the Net Price for Full-Time Students at Louisiana Public Institutions



U.S. Department of Education, Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System, Student Financial Aid Files and Directory Files 2018 and 2022, 12-Month Enrollment Instructional Activity Files 2018 and 2022. American Community Survey Public Use Microdata Samples 2018 and 2022. Institutional sectors based on SREB-State Data Exchange categories.

Non-tuition costs have also increased. EducationData.org reports that nationally between 1999–2000 and 2019–20, when adjusted for inflation, the cost of the average dorm room for one year increased by 65%, while the average meal plan for one year increased by 35% (<https://educationdata.org/average-cost-of-college-by-year>).

Program Restrictions, Cost of Attendance, and First-Dollar and Last-Dollar Models

While tuition is a significant component of the cost of attending college, it is far from the only cost incurred by a student. Instead, the full cost of attending a postsecondary institution may include tuition and fees; textbooks, supplies, and equipment; room and board; transportation; basic needs; dependent care; and more. There are currently considerable variations between what each of Louisiana’s financial aid programs defines as eligible for the aid to cover.

Louisiana's financial aid programs have stipulations on how the funds must be spent and how those dollars can be combined with other financial aid or scholarships. Table 25 provides a summary of these details for the financial aid programs addressed in this report.

Table 25. Louisiana Financial Aid Programs

Program	Type of Aid*	Covers
Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)	Flexible.	TOPS Award Amount. Can be combined with other forms of financial aid, as long as the COA is not exceeded.
TOPS Tech Early Start	Not applicable.	\$50 per credit hour toward dual enrollment courses in a top-demand occupation, not to exceed \$300/semester.
M.J. Foster Promise Program	First Restricted Dollar in first semester; last restricted dollar thereafter. Excludes student loans, Federal Work Study, and WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) funds.	Tuition, required fees, and mandatory supplies.
Louisiana GO Grant	Flexible.	No limitations. Can be combined with other forms of financial aid, as long as the COA is not exceeded.
Louisiana Geaux Teach Scholarship Program	Last Restricted Dollar after state and institutional aid.	May only be applied for tuition, required fees, textbooks, materials, and instructional supplies required for the course.
Louisiana National Guard Patriot Scholarship	Flexible.	An amount equal to the mandatory fees charged by the institution attended. Can be combined with other forms of financial aid, as long as the COA is not exceeded.

*Flexible - Funding may be used to pay any COA.

First Restricted Dollar -

Funding may be used first, but it is restricted as to which part of COA it may be used to pay.

Last Restricted Dollar - Funding must be used last and is restricted to which part of COA it may be used to pay.

These initiatives are designed to make college more affordable, particularly for students from low- or middle-income backgrounds. Each program specifies the order in which its benefits may be applied. Typically, such designations are legislatively mandated. These differences make it challenging for financial aid offices to combine funding from the various aid programs to support student enrollment.

The first-dollar model awards aid funds before any other grant or scholarship. It does not account for additional grants or scholarships for which the student may be eligible. This model allows the use of all public funds and affords greater flexibility in using additional aid for non-tuition

expenses. Once additional scholarships or grants are activated, the student may have funds remaining to pay for the associated costs of being a student, such as fees, room and board, textbooks, equipment, transportation, childcare, and other costs. For example, a first-dollar scholarship might pay the student's tuition and fees in full, allowing their federal Pell Grant to be used for living expenses, provided that the amount does not exceed the total cost of attendance.

The last-dollar model covers any remaining tuition and fees after other financial aid (Pell Grant and scholarships) have been applied. Specifically, the model isolates recipients to only students with specific unmet expenses. Table 26 illustrates the key differences between these two models.

Table 26. Key Differences Between First-Dollar and Last-Dollar Promise Programs

Aspect	First-Dollar Program	Last-Dollar Program
Timing of Award	Applied before other aid.	Applied after other aid.
Coverage	Leaves other aid free for non-tuition costs.*	Covers tuition gaps but not other costs.
Target Students	Benefits a broader range of students.	Focuses primarily on those with specific unmet financial need.

*Provided that the total amount does not exceed the total cost of attendance.

A last-dollar financial aid program can create difficulties for some students. The current structure of the Geaux Teach program provides an illustrative example. A student who is eligible for TOPS and is eligible for an institutional scholarship may have their entire tuition, fees, and instructional costs covered by those two funding sources. If they are in a teaching program, they may be eligible to receive funds from Geaux Teach, but since all eligible costs for that program are covered, there is no last dollar left to award. Even though the student may still need assistance with room and board for example. If the Geaux Teach program only covers tuition and fees and textbook costs and those are already covered by other aid, the student would not be able to apply the Geaux Teach funds to those specific remaining educational expenses.

TOPS Capped at 2016–17 Levels

TOPS's award amounts were capped in 2016–17 by the legislature. This has resulted in the amounts that TOPS recipients receive being frozen at those tuition levels set almost ten years ago. The scholarship amount varies by institution. As a result, when TOPS is compared to the actual cost of attendance at Louisiana's two and four-year institutions, TOPS funding has not kept up with the rising costs of attending college. For reference, Appendix A provides TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Tech student award amounts for 2024–25 (based on the 2016 capped amount). Appendix B provides the 2024–25 annual mandatory tuition and fees for undergraduates by system.

As Appendix B shows TOPS no longer covers the cost of attendance at any public institution in the state. It covers, for example, an estimated 61% of cost at BPCC and 70.5% of the cost to attend LSU-Alexandria. As a result, students would be required to seek other aid or loans to cover the gap in their scholarship in order to enroll in college.

As we have noted, out-of-state institutions are recruiting our Louisiana students away because many offer more substantial scholarships to attend their schools. This trend is clearly shown in the data concerning the proportions of students who, while eligible to receive TOPS, choose instead to leave the state to attend college.

Recommendations

Senate Resolution 138 requires that this report make recommendations for the future of Louisiana’s financial aid programs. In particular, the Resolution asks this report to address:

1. Strategies to align the eligibility criteria for each financial assistance program in ways that enable them to work together more effectively.
2. Strategies to align the eligibility criteria for each financial assistance program with the Louisiana Board of Regents' minimum admission requirements and the state's college and career-ready definition.
3. Recommendations for legislation, if any, necessary to remove barriers or otherwise improve the functioning and utilization of financial assistance programs for Louisiana's students.

The Board of Regents and LOSFA will work collaboratively to establish clear, uniform definitions for differing types of aid, such as flexible dollars, restricted dollars, restricted first, and restricted last dollars, along with a map to clarify the application of funds based on legislative guidelines to assist families and campus financial aid officers. In this section of the report, we will explore productive ways to amend these programs in light of identified trends and data that has been presented.

As mentioned in this report’s Background section, all of the scholarship awards discussed are subject to appropriation by the Louisiana Legislature. In Louisiana, a significant decrease in state support for higher education at the beginning of the last decade has made state support per full-time equivalent student (FTE) almost the lowest in the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) states. Indeed, SREB’s 2024 College Affordability Profile of Louisiana shows that the percentage of family income required to pay for higher education in Louisiana is far above the SREB average. This makes the level of support available through Louisiana’s financial aid

programs critical to the affordability of higher education opportunities for many Louisiana residents. Three of the programs, in particular, would benefit from an increase in funding.

While the funds available for GO Grants (need-based aid) has increased \$43.8 million over the last six years the currently available funds are still not sufficient to meet the demand. Likewise, the demand for the M.J. Foster program is now far outpacing the current allocation of \$10.5 million. During this academic year the program has already provided support to more students than in the first two years combined, and is on pace to exhaust not only its initial allocation, but also the additional \$7 million that were remaining from the first implementation year. Consequently, the Board of Regents has requested a budget increase in GO Grant funds of \$10 million and a budget increase of \$10.5 million, to double the funding support for our adult financial aid program. We have also recommended increasing the appropriation for the Patriot Scholarship Program by \$2.3 million, given the need and popularity of the program.

Ensure Alignment between the State’s Career and Technical Financial Aid Programs

***Goal:** Align the eligible and approved high-demand high-wage programs across all the state’s Career and Technical Financial Aid programs.*

Currently, the three career and technically related programs – TOPS Tech, TOPS Tech Early Start, and M.J. Foster Promise – have three different procedures for creating their list of eligible programs. That inconsistency has led to confusion on the part of potentially eligible students, as well as the institutions that offer those programs. Recent legislation modified the procedure for M.J. Foster Promise by directing the Louisiana Workforce Commission to drive the identification process for eligible high-demand, high-wage programs. Consequently, we recommend legislation that aligns the eligible program list and approval procedures for TOPS Tech and TOPS Early Start to the M.J. Foster Promise eligibility list. In this way, regardless of the age of the students participating – high school, traditional college students or adults – the state’s financial aid dollars for career and technical education are aligned to the same critical need programs for our state identified by the Louisiana Workforce Commission.

Establish a “First Restricted Dollar” Usage for the Geaux Teach Scholarship

***Goal:** Eliminate policy constraints, thereby allowing institutions to better target and utilize resources to enable needy students to cover more of the real costs of education.*

Currently the Geaux Teach financial aid program requires that the scholarship provides a last dollar award to pay for unmet costs for tuition, fees and instructional materials after all other state and institutional aid have been applied. This approach means that students who qualify for other scholarships that can meet these, and other expenses, cannot utilize their Geaux Teach scholarship dollars for all of their higher education expenses. Instead, eligibility for other state and institutional support often means that there is no last dollar left to be awarded, despite the student having unmet financial needs to attend college. This has led to underutilization of this award, as described earlier in this report

We recommend modifying the statutory language governing Geaux Teach so that these dollars can be utilized as first restricted dollars that cover tuition, fees and instructional materials. This approach would align this scholarship with the approach employed for the M.J. Foster Promise. This legislative change with Geaux Teach would overcome its current under-utilization by transforming it into a first-dollar program using the same set of eligible education expense categories. As a result, this would enable these state funds to be utilized for any tuition, fee, or instruction-related expense while retaining the flexibility of other financial aid that the student might also receive.

Increase the Competitiveness of the TOPS Awards

***Goal:** Increase TOPS program award levels to attract and retain more of Louisiana’s high school students as part of Louisiana’s education talent pipeline.*

The trend data show a steadily declining proportion of TOPS eligible students are opting to accept that financial support. Indeed, a growing proportion of those who refuse their award choose to leave the state to pursue their education. Consequently, we recommend a variety of modifications to TOPS programs that are intended to increase the utilization of all TOPS awards and enable Louisiana to retain more of its best and brightest talent in the state.

As we have seen, part of the reason behind the decline in TOPS acceptance is the declining value of the award in comparison with today's college-going costs and scholarships in other states. We recommend revisiting the freeze of the TOPS awards at the 2016–17 levels to address declining scholarship competitiveness. Consideration should be given to the following: an increase in the stipend awards for Performance and/or Honors recipients to prioritize retaining Louisiana’s highest-achieving students; an increase in the overall base level of TOPS at all levels to strengthen affordability; and/or expanding the reach of TOPS to target particular high-need career fields.

Adjust the TOPS Eligibility Criteria

Goal: *Adjust the eligibility criteria for the TOPS Opportunity, Performance, and Honors awards in ways that enable better alignment with achieving the state's 2030 attainment goal.*

The Board of Regents, in partnership with the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, has set about significantly increasing availability and access to dual enrollment experiences across the state. This strategy is based on the evidence that students who begin their college education in high school are much more likely to continue to a post-high-school education experience. This concerted and multi-pronged approach has resulted in three years of double-digit percentage increases in dual enrollment and, for the first time in several years, an increase in the state's college-going rate for high school graduates to 56.5%, a return to the 2019 level. In 2022 the Board of Regents also added admission pathways to the state's public universities that utilize demonstrated success in academic early-college coursework. Building on this successful work, we recommend that TOPS' current ACT and GPA eligibility requirements for Opportunity, Performance, and Honors awards be modified to also include eligibility pathways for successful completion of academic early-college coursework as an alternative clear demonstration of a student's potential for college success.

In parallel with the TOPS Opportunity, Performance, and Honors, we also recommend that TOPS Tech's current ACT, GPA, and WorkKeys eligibility requirements be modified to include eligibility pathways that include successful completion of early-college CTE coursework as an alternative clear demonstration of a student's potential for college success.

Louisiana continues to see a rise in the number of students enrolling part-time, yet the student success research clearly shows that full-time students are far more likely to complete their education. We recommend that while we promote the state programs that do support part-time enrollment – GO Grants, M.J. Foster Promise, and Patriot Scholarship – we also specifically address the eligibility window for TOPS Tech part-time students. Currently these students cannot receive TOPS Tech because the program does not allow for part-time enrollment. However, the scholarship does allow a one-year window for a part-time student to become full-time and accept the TOPS Tech award. We recommend legislation to allow a successful part-time student to retain their TOPS Tech deferment for as long as they continue to make satisfactory academic progress as a part-time student. In this way, we create an incentive for a student to move to full-time studies while recognizing the efforts that they are making to pursue their educational journey.

Increase Awareness and Usage of TOPS Tech Early Start

Goal: *Increase awareness of regional availability of, and enrollment in TOPS Tech Early Start.*

TOPS Tech Early Start is a program designed to provide support for eligible 11th- and 12th-grade high school students attending Louisiana public high schools to pursue an industry-based occupational or vocational education credential via dual enrollment. Currently, TTES is one of the most underutilized of the state's financial aid programs. Furthermore, there has been a significant declining trend in the utilization of this program across time. This trend is in direct contrast to the significant growth that the state has seen in dual enrollment in recent years and to the objective of increasing the prevalence of participation in career and technical education. Currently there appears to be a knowledge barrier for both students and advisors regarding the benefits of this program.

We recommend a deliberate awareness campaign to help students and school administrators understand how to access these dollars. We also recommend developing a strategy to expand the provider base across the state.

As stated earlier, we also recommend legislative action that aligns the list of programs eligible for TOPS Tech Early Start with the list of programs that are eligible for M.J. Foster Promise.

Key Considerations:

- Increase awareness of the program. Currently, there appears to be a knowledge barrier for both students and advisors regarding the benefits of this program.
- Simplify the provider application process to incentivize high school and postsecondary participation.
- Expand the footprint of the program statewide so all students can participate.
- Develop options for students and schools to combine TTES and MFP Supplemental Course Allocation dollars to pay for dual enrollment.

Require Data Submission for All Financial Aid Programs

Goal: *Require all state financial programs' data to be shared with the data administrator to conduct and report on statewide financial aid trends, effectiveness, outcomes assessment, and other factors.*

In compiling this report, as well as other annual reports produced by the Board of Regents, it has become apparent how crucial it is to have a full data picture that allows the state to make strategic decisions about how public funds are allocated and the effectiveness of those efforts. While a complete data set is available to analyze the impact and effectiveness of the state's financial aid programs in the public and proprietary sectors, currently there is no such data set available from the schools in the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU). We recommend legislation that enables the Board of Regents to establish a uniform data set and requires every institution that receives state funds, whether public, private, or proprietary, to provide that data set to the Board of Regents.

Conclusion

The path to affordable higher education is complex and involves a combination of financial support, cost containment, and structural reforms. By implementing comprehensive policies, our state and institutions can increase educational attainment and affordability in Louisiana. Many of our state scholarships were established many years ago when tuition and fees were the primary focus. At that time, the holistic cost of a college education was often not widely or uniformly considered. However, over the past several years, it has become increasingly important to acknowledge that students have costs over and above tuition that may preclude them from attending college. It is no longer just a matter of creating financial aid programs to pay tuition and fees, but also of recognizing that we must update those programs to meet today's college students' comprehensive financial aid needs given the return on that investment to both the individual and their family as well as the state's tax base. This investment in our people is especially important in Louisiana, where the cost of attendance at both two- and four-year institutions is among the highest in the SREB states as a proportion of average family income.

We look forward to further discussions and actions taken to better align Louisiana's financial aid offerings in support of the state's goals to increase educational attainment and meet the economic and workforce needs of the state. These recommendations would improve alignment across aid programs, strengthen workforce program eligibility, strengthen the purchasing power of TOPS, and work ultimately to increase the attainment of Louisiana's talent base as our state works to retain our best and brightest.

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Appendix A: TOPS Annual Award Amounts 2024–2025

TOPS OPH ANNUAL AWARD AMOUNTS FOR 2024-25

Institutions	Legislatively Set TOPS Annual Amount	2024-25 TOPS Annual Amount ⁽²⁾ (3)	Fall Semester/Quarter 2024-25 TOPS Maximum Payment	Winter Quarter 2024-25 Maximum TOPS Payment	Spring Semester/Quarter 2024-25 Maximum TOPS Payment	TOPS Stipend Amounts	
2 Year							
Baton Rouge Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,086.08	\$3,086.08	\$1,543.04		\$1,543.04	HONORS = \$800 PERFORMANCE = \$400 Annually	
Bossier Parish Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
Central Louisiana Technical Community Col. ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
Delgado Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
L. E. Fletcher Technical Comm. Col. ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
Louisiana Delta Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
LSU – Eunice	\$2,710.64	\$2,710.64	\$1,355.32		\$1,355.32		
Northshore Technical Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
Northwest Louisiana Technical Comm. Col. ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
Nunez Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
River Parishes Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
South Louisiana Community College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
SOWELA Technical Comm. College ⁽¹⁾	\$3,214.15	\$3,214.15	\$1,607.07		\$1,607.08		
SU-Shreveport	\$2,618.00	\$2,618.00	\$1,309.00		\$1,309.00		
4 Year							
Grambling State University	\$5,139.75	\$5,139.75	\$2,569.87		\$2,569.88	HONORS = \$400/semester or \$266.66/quarter/term PERFORMANCE = \$200/semester or \$133.33/quarter/term	
LSU – Alexandria	\$4,894.25	\$4,894.25	\$2,447.12		\$2,447.13		
LSU – BR	\$7,462.98	\$7,462.98	\$3,731.49		\$3,731.49		
LSU HSC – NO	Allied Health	\$7,673.22	\$7,673.22	\$3,836.61			\$3,836.61
	Nursing	\$5,611.50	\$5,611.50	\$2,805.75			\$2,805.75
	Dental Hygiene	\$5,517.00	\$5,517.00	\$2,758.50			\$2,758.50
	Dental Lab Tech	\$4,987.26	\$4,987.26	\$2,493.63			\$2,493.63
	Public Health	\$8,858.00	\$8,858.00	\$4,429.00			\$4,429.00
LSU HSC – Shreveport	\$7,182.56	\$7,182.56	\$3,591.28		\$3,591.28		
LSU – Shreveport	\$5,372.29	\$5,372.29	\$2,686.14		\$2,686.15		
Louisiana Tech University (Quarters)	\$5,553.00	\$5,553.00	\$1,851.00	\$1,851.00	\$1,851.00		
McNeese State University	\$5,147.34	\$5,147.34	\$2,573.67		\$2,573.67		
Nicholls State University	\$4,922.28	\$4,922.28	\$2,461.14		\$2,461.14		
Northwestern State University	\$5,180.00	\$5,180.00	\$2,590.00		\$2,590.00		
Southeastern La University	\$5,652.21	\$5,652.21	\$2,826.10		\$2,826.11		
SU-Baton Rouge	\$4,973.10	\$4,973.10	\$2,486.55		\$2,486.55		
SU-New Orleans	\$4,236.21	\$4,236.21	\$2,118.10		\$2,118.11		
UL – Lafayette	\$5,406.96	\$5,406.96	\$2,703.48		\$2,703.48		
UL – Monroe	\$5,787.52	\$5,787.52	\$2,893.76		\$2,893.76		
University of New Orleans	\$6,090.37	\$6,090.37	\$3,045.19		\$3,045.18		
Out-of-State Institutions for Hearing Impaired Students⁽²⁾							
Gallaudet University	\$5,718.00	\$5,718.00	\$2,859.00		\$2,859.00		
Rochester Institute of Tech.	\$5,718.00	\$5,718.00	\$2,859.00		\$2,859.00		
LAICU Institutions: Centenary, Dillard, Louisiana College, Loyola, NO Baptist Seminary, University of Holy Cross, Franciscan Missionaries of Our Lady University (Formerly OLOL), St. Joseph's, Tulane, Xavier							
All Schools (Academic Programs - including Graduate and Professional Programs)	\$5,718.00	\$5,718.00	\$2,859.00		\$2,859.00		
Proprietary and Cosmetology Schools							
Proprietary and Cosmetology Schools	\$2,380.00	\$2,380.00	\$793.33	\$793.33	\$793.34		
TOPS Eligible Students in a Public Graduate or Professional Programs							
All Graduate Programs ⁽⁴⁾ (Semester)	\$8,858.00	\$8,858.00	\$4,429.00		\$4,429.00		
All Graduate Programs ⁽⁴⁾ (Quarter)	\$8,858.00	\$8,858.00	\$2,952.67	\$2,952.67	\$2,952.66		

Notes: (1) Includes all campuses within the designated colleges.
 (2) Schools/Programs that are specifically designed to accommodate deaf and hard-of-hearing students. Includes both Academic and Technical Programs.
 (3) The total amount does not include summer payments allowed for students enrolled full time in technical programs or students in an academic program that elect to have their award paid for a qualified summer session. The amount of the award may not exceed the tuition amount charged to the student for summer attendance.
 (4) The TOPS Award Payment for TOPS eligible students enrolled in a graduate/professional program is limited to the full tuition charged by a school for enrollment in the respective graduate program or the maximum TOPS Award amount listed here, whichever is less.
 (5) Actual amounts payable subject to appropriation and funding.
 (6) A student's award payment may be less than that listed on this chart if the student is enrolled in less than 12 hours, but is considered to be full-time for their program of study.

Appendix B: 2024 Annual Mandatory Tuition and Fees

2024-25 ANNUAL MANDATORY TUITION AND FEES - UNDERGRADUATE

As of August 1, 2024

THIS CHART DOES NOT SHOW TOTAL COST OF ATTENDANCE

UNDERGRADUATE ONLY	**ANNUAL RESIDENT TUITION (15 HRS)	ANNUAL TOPS OPPORTUNITY AWARD	ADDITIONAL COSTS AFTER TOPS AWARD	PERCENTAGE COVERED BY TOPS	**ANNUAL RESIDENT TUITION & FEES (15 HRS)	ANNUAL TOPS OPPORTUNITY AWARD	ADDITIONAL COSTS AFTER TOPS AWARD	PERCENTAGE COVERED BY TOPS
SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY SYSTEM								
Southern Baton Rouge	\$4,973	\$4,973	\$0	100.0%	\$9,923	\$4,973	\$4,950	50.1%
Southern New Orleans	\$4,482	\$4,482	\$0	100.0%	\$8,466	\$4,482	\$3,984	52.9%
Southern Shreveport	\$2,618	\$2,618	\$0	100.0%	\$4,380	\$2,618	\$1,762	59.8%
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA SYSTEM								
Grambling	\$5,140	\$5,140	\$0	100.0%	\$7,683	\$5,140	\$2,543	66.9%
Louisiana Tech *	\$5,553	\$5,553	\$0	100.0%	\$10,755	\$5,553	\$5,202	51.6%
McNeese	\$5,147	\$5,147	\$0	100.0%	\$8,832	\$5,147	\$3,684	58.3%
Nicholls	\$4,922	\$4,922	\$0	100.0%	\$8,233	\$4,922	\$3,311	59.8%
Northwestern	\$5,180	\$5,180	\$0	100.0%	\$8,894	\$5,180	\$3,714	58.2%
Southeastern	\$5,777	\$5,652	\$125	97.8%	\$8,559	\$5,652	\$2,907	66.0%
Univ. of LA at Lafayette	\$5,407	\$5,407	\$0	100.0%	\$11,294	\$5,407	\$5,887	47.9%
Univ. of LA at Monroe	\$5,788	\$5,788	\$0	100.0%	\$9,579	\$5,788	\$3,791	60.4%
UNO	\$6,090	\$6,090	\$0	100.0%	\$9,454	\$6,090	\$3,364	64.4%
LOUISIANA STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM								
LSU Alexandria	\$4,894	\$4,894	\$0	100.0%	\$6,939	\$4,894	\$2,045	70.5%
LSU A&M	\$7,463	\$7,463	\$0	100.0%	\$11,954	\$7,463	\$4,491	62.4%
LSU Eunice	\$2,711	\$2,711	\$0	100.0%	\$4,868	\$2,711	\$2,157	55.7%
LSU Shreveport	\$5,522	\$5,372	\$150	97.3%	\$7,520	\$5,372	\$2,148	71.4%
LSU HSC NO - Allied Health	\$7,673	\$7,673	\$0	100.0%	\$9,033	\$7,673	\$1,359	85.0%
LSU HSC NO - Dental Hygiene	\$5,517	\$5,517	\$0	100.0%	\$10,345	\$5,517	\$4,828	53.3%
LSU HSC NO - Dental Lab Tech	\$4,987	\$4,987	\$0	100.0%	\$6,309	\$4,987	\$1,322	79.0%
LSU HSC NO - Nursing	\$5,612	\$5,612	\$0	100.0%	\$8,999	\$5,612	\$3,388	62.4%
LSU HSC NO - Public Health	\$11,400	\$8,858	\$2,542	77.7%	\$11,400	\$8,858	\$2,542	77.7%
LSU HSC Shr - Allied Health	\$7,183	\$7,183	\$0	100.0%	\$8,386	\$7,183	\$1,204	85.6%
LOUISIANA COMMUNITY & TECHNICAL COLLEGE SYSTEM								
Baton Rouge CC	\$3,086	\$3,086	\$0	100.0%	\$4,321	\$3,086	\$1,235	71.4%
Bossier Parish CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$5,267	\$3,214	\$2,053	61.0%
Delgado CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,279	\$3,214	\$1,065	75.1%
Louisiana Delta CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,199	\$3,214	\$985	76.5%
L.E. Fletcher Tech. CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,219	\$3,214	\$1,005	76.2%
Etaine P Nunez CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,255	\$3,214	\$1,041	75.5%
River Parishes CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,209	\$3,214	\$995	76.4%
South Louisiana CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,245	\$3,214	\$1,031	75.7%
SOWELA Tech. CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,335	\$3,214	\$1,121	74.1%
Northshore Tech. CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,299	\$3,214	\$1,085	74.8%
Central Louisiana Tech. CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,209	\$3,214	\$995	76.4%
NW Louisiana Tech. CC	\$3,214	\$3,214	\$0	100.0%	\$4,149	\$3,214	\$935	77.5%