



LOSFA

PRESS RELEASE



From the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance

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Louisiana Connect College Access and Career Planning Portal Now Has More Than 100,000 Active Accounts

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) today announced that the Louisiana Connect college access and career planning Web portal (www.louisianaconnect.org) has exceeded 100,000 active accounts.

The Louisiana Connect portal (www.louisianaconnect.org) provides an ever-increasing set of tools and resources to help students plan for life after high school, find colleges where they can be successful, and launch rewarding careers. Importantly, Louisiana Connect provides professional school counselors, parents, teachers and advisors with a full suite of tracking dashboards, reporting capabilities, and communication tools to help students navigate the process.

“Surpassing the 100,000 user mark represents a significant milestone,” said LOSFA Executive Director Melanie Amrhein. “As we celebrate this achievement,” she added, “we would be remiss if we did not acknowledge the unprecedented level of cooperation and support LOSFA has received from the Louisiana Department of Education, both in the form of data sharing and in promoting the use of the Louisiana Connect portal to the state’s middle and high schools, as a major factor in reaching this level of student and parent participation so quickly.”

The most recent feature to be added to the Louisiana Connect portal is the TOPS Progress Tracker. This tool provides students and their parents with an ongoing opportunity to review student progression toward meeting the requirements necessary to qualify for a Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) scholarship award using their actual academic information. “This is a tool that LOSFA has dreamed of for many years and the Louisiana Connect portal is making it a reality,” Amrhein said. “It will ensure that all students have equal access to critical information regarding their future eligibility for a TOPS award and to plan accordingly. For example, if discrepancies are detected that are not explained in the footnotes on the TOPS Progress Tracker display, students and/or parents can quickly notify the appropriate officials and, if warranted, corrections can be made promptly to avoid potential delays in TOPS eligibility processing,” she added. The TOPS Progress Tracker also displays the student’s highest ACT score on record and their current TOPS Core Curriculum Grade Point Average.

The Louisiana Connect college access and career planning portal allows students to:

- Connect with colleges and universities that are a match for their educational and career goals
- Learn about careers and connect with employers
- Find scholarships and other programs designed to help the student succeed
- Access an exclusive News Feed and Event Planner
- Build a profile to highlight individual skills and achievements
- Learn how a college education can be affordable
- Compare costs and academic offerings from various in and out of state schools

Other Louisiana Connect portal highlights include:

- Integration of state-mandated Individual Graduation Plan
- Louisiana Department of Education student data loaded into the web portal, pre-populating student profiles, and driving college, scholarship and career matching
- Guided college searching, matching and comparison tools
- Scholarship Searching & Matching including the ability for counselors to upload local scholarships
- Career Exploration & Planning: Interest, Skills & Values assessments mapped to occupation profiles, internships, and career planning strategies
- Dashboards & Reporting: Resources that empower counselors to help students stay on track to graduate and to earn targeted scholarships and grants

In addition, LOSFA is working with numerous college access organizations, Gear-Up and TRiO programs and community organizations throughout the state to participate and alert students through the portal of various opportunities and events that will assist with postsecondary education preparation and financing.

Future portal enhancements that are in various stages of development include:

- Integration of Louisiana Connect with the Louisiana Workforce Commission's Star Jobs Web site
- The development, in partnership with Board of Regents, The Louisiana Department of Education and the Louisiana Workforce Commission of public landing pages that will provide valuable college access and financing resources to populations without active Louisiana Connect accounts including adult-learners who are returning to school or seeking career makeovers
- The development of a Louisiana Connect smart phone application that will be beta-tested this summer.

About LOSFA

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) is a state agency and is the Administrative arm of the Louisiana Student Financial Assistance Commission and the Louisiana Tuition Trust Authority. Some of the programs administered by LOSFA include Louisiana's premier merit based scholarship program, the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS); the state's 529 college savings plan, the Student Tuition Assistance and Revenue Trust (START) program; the state's primary need based grant program, the Louisiana Go Grant; the Rockefeller State Wildlife Scholarship program; the Chafee Educational Training Voucher program, and the John R. Justice Student Loan Repayment program.

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