

Delgado Community College

Office of Student Financial Assistance

Louisiana State Aid Policy and Procedure Manual

2021 – 2022

Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)

Chafee Educational Training Voucher (ETV)

10/13/2021

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Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)

Tuition and Fees Per Semester
After TOPS Performance Award is Applied*



TOPS is a programs of state scholarships for Louisiana residents who attend either one of the *Louisiana Public Colleges and Universities*, schools that are a part of the *Louisiana Community and Technical College System* or institutions that are a part of the *Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities*.

Eligibility is determined by Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) following a student’s graduation from high school. Award letters will be mailed to students by LOSFA starting in May. Additional information is available on LOSFA’s website (www.osfa.state.la.us) or by telephone (1-800-259-5626, ext. 1012).

TOPS Award Amounts For 2021-2022 Award Year	
2021-2022 TOPS Annual Amounts for Delgado	\$3,214.15
2021-2022 TOPS Amount Per Semester for Delgado	\$1,607.07

TOPS Eligibility/ Qualifications

- TOPS are awarded based on the student's ACT score
- TOPS will pay tuition and no fees
- TOPS recipients must complete 24 earned hours within the academic year or they will lose TOPS
- Students must be enrolled full time (at least 12 semester hours)
- TOPS Tech students must be enrolled in Certificate of Technical Studies, Associate of Applied Science, Technical Diploma or Post-Associate Certificate
- Act 230 of the 2015 Regular Session of the Louisiana Legislature provides that 2017 high school graduates will be able to use the TOPS Tech Award to pursue an associate's degree or other shorter-term training and education programs, including skill, occupational, vocational, technical, certificate, and academic, that the Workforce Investment Council (WIC) and the Board of Regents (BOR) determine are aligned to state workforce priorities. Eligible program at Delgado are: American Sign Language Interpreting (AA), Business Administration (AS), Criminal Justice (AS), Electrical Engineering Technology (AS) and Nursing (ASN).
- Delgado Student Financial Assistance office will begin processing TOPS payments after the 15th class day. Funding will be posted to eligible student's accounts after the Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) releases the funding to the college.
- TOPS recipients who withdraw prior to the 14th class day will lose their TOPS award and therefore will not be eligible for funding.

Tips to Make Sure Your TOPS Processing Goes Smoothly

- Make sure that you indicate your name, date of birth, and home street address the same on all documents (*school records, ACT test registrations, FAFSA, college applications, etc.*)
 - If your name is John Alan Smith, Jr. do not fill one application out as John A. Smith, Jr. and another as J.A. Smith, Jr., or another as J. Alan Smith,
 - A good rule to follow is to use the same spelling and abbreviations as printed on your Social Security Card.
- Make sure that you are aware that your TOPS Award is based on your TOPS Core GPA and not your overall cumulative GPA. Be aware that TOPS will not round GPA's. A 2.49 cannot round to a 2.50.

- Make sure that your FAFSA application is signed by both the student and a parent before submission

TOPS Processing of State Aid in Banner

Run RZPLSRI – TOPS Award Roster Import

The TOPS Award Roster Import function is used to load the student's TOPS award into Banner on RPAAWRD form as a batch process using the new LOSFA Master Roster. The roster will be pulled from LOSFA weekly so any newly qualified students can be imported.

It will not duplicate any TOPS awards that have already been loaded into RPAAWRD so colleges can run the process as often as necessary.

Form Name: RZPLSRI

Printer Name: DATABASE

Parameter Values:

- File Name – TOPS_Master_Roster.txt
- Run Mode – U (update)
- For each award amount in the Values column, enter the actual term amount only.
- Import awards only for term: If you want to only import for one term (ex. 202110 for Fall 2020), then enter that term in parameter 10. If you want to run it for any term that is in the master roster, leave blank.

Check the Save Parameters Set button

Click on Submit

Save

 Go to Options, click on Review Output [GJIREVO]

Right click in the job box

Open the .lis file

Go back to Options

Select Show Document (save and print)

Click on Save File

Click OK

You will find the .lis file in your temp folder

□ Delgado Community College IT team will run the following reports weekly – check reports for accuracy. Inform IT team member when to change report to the next semester.

- FFAM0203 – Students with accepted TOPS for term (ex – 202210/Fall 2021) with awards, major and hours
- FFAM0280 – TOPS Tech award with a non-tech major
- FFAM0281 – TOPS eligible with 9 or more credits (These are the students who are Nursing and Allied Health students who are program full time with 9 credits)
- FFAM0287 – Award not posted due to unmet need

LCTCS TOPS Billing COGNOS Reports

There are two Financial Aid COGNOS reports, TOPS_BILLING_REVIEW and TOPS_BILLING_FILE_CREATE.

The TOPS_BILLING_REVIEW report can be used to review the information that will be pulled in the billing file on students. It also provides you with the ability to review TOPTEC awardees to see if they are enrolled in an Academic/Technical program so you can correct any students who are not eligible for TOPTEC prior to submitting a billing file to LOSFA

Both reports are designed so that you can run using accepted amounts (for schools that do not disburse TOPS until after being paid by the state) or using paid amounts (for schools that disburse TOPS prior to billing the state). One of the prompts is the “proration percentage”. This allows you to enter the percentage TOPS is being prorated for the term. The report will then review the paid/accepted value of TOPS and report on the “un-prorated” value.

Example: For 201710 TOPS is prorated at 93.06%. The prorated value awarded is 1495.54. Full time (100%) TOPS award is \$1607.07.

The prompts are the same for both reports and descriptions are provided on the screen.

The first step each semester is to run the TOPS_BILLING_FILE_REVIEW report to review students awarded the various TOPS fund codes to determine if any updates are needed prior to invoicing.

UPDATE (10/06/2017): *Effective with the Fall 2017 semester, certain students that are TOPTEC eligible can enrolled in certain academic programs and receive TOPTEC funding.*

Students awarded TOPTEC under this provision in the TOPS regulations must be invoiced in a program type of "T= Technical".

To accommodate this, additional columns have been added to the TOPS_BILLING_REVIEW report. Added columns are the student's degree code, major code, and a column labeled "REPORT_AS_TECHNICAL"

The college controls the value of the "Report as Technical" on an individual student basis. If a student is enrolled in a TOPTEC eligible academic program for the billed term, then the college must set a flag on the student record to override the reporting of the student's program as an academic program.

This flag is set on ROAUSDF for the associated aid year. The field values to update are:

- Field 201 = FALL TERM TOPTEC ACADEMIC OVERRIDE
- Field 202 = SPRING TERM TOPTEC ACADEMIC OVERRIDE
- FIELD 203 = SUMMER TERM TOPTEC ACADEMIC OVERRIDE

A financial aid staff member reviewing the TOPS Billing file will need to update the appropriate field to a value of "Y" for the term being invoice if the student should be reported under a Technical status.

Colleges who have opted to place the TOPS billing responsibilities outside the Financial Aid Office will need to provide a list of students to be flagged to the Financial Aid Office at their college for those students to be updated.

The screen shot below provides an example of how ROAUSDF must be set:

Fields 1-40		Fields 41-80		Fields 81-120		Fields 121-160		Fields 161-200		Fields 201-240		Fields 241-280		Fields 281-320	
Number	Description	Value		Value		Value		Value		Number	Description	Value		Value	
201	FALL TERM TOPTEC ACADEMIC OVERRI	Y				221									
202	SPRING TERM TOPTEC ACADEMIC OVER					222									
203	SUMMER TERM TOPTEC ACADEMIC OVE					223									

After reviewing the records in the TOPS_BILLING_FILE_REVIEW and making all appropriate adjustments to the student records, you may run the

TOPS_BILLING_FILE_CREATE report. After this report runs it should open in MS Excel. There will be a header row of "FLATFILE" and rows of fixed formatted data.

1. Delete the "FLATFILE" header row
2. Save the file as a MS-DOS based text file using a file extension of .txt
 - a. (i.e. TOPS_BILLING_09132016.TXT)
3. Upload the file to LOSFA through the LOSFA Award System Portal. Send the file to IT (Celeste) and she will upload to LOSFA. She will send a confirmation once the file has been accepted by LOSFA

How to Run COGNOS TOPS Billing File

LOLA Homepage

Click on Cognos 11 Production below

Sign in using your LOLA login

Click on Team Content

Scroll down and click on Financial Aid Folder Reports

Scroll down and click on TOPS Billing Review

Complete Billing Review Requirements. See below:

Select College Code: **DCC**

CAMPUS_FLAG = Y/N based prompt. If college reports TOPS as 1 campus value should be 'N'. If college reports TOPS by individual campus, value must be 'Y': **N**

CAMPUS_CODE = 2-character campus code. If college reports TOPS as one college under one ID, should be 2-character code of main campus. If college reports TOPS by individual college using different IDs per college, then the 2-character campus code for the campus being reported:

FA-City Park Campus

TERM_Code = code in Banner from STVTERM for term being reported: **202210 – Fall 2021**
(example)

Aid Year Code being reported: **2122** (example)

PRORATED_PERCENT = TOPS proration percentage for term (i.e. for Fall 2016 = 93.06%, user would enter 93.06)

100 (Use 100% if no proration – enter 100)

PAID_ONLY = Y/N based prompt. USED to designate whether report should be pulled based on the accepted TOPS amount vs the paid TOPS values for the term: **N**

TOPS and Criminal Activity

If a staff member discovers that a TOPS eligible student has been convicted of a crime they should follow guidance outlined in this statute.

THE LAW

LSA R.S. 17:5028 provides that a student must not have any criminal convictions other than misdemeanor traffic violations to be eligible for TOPS. This includes any plea of guilty and of no contest.¹ Neither LOSFA staff nor the Board can provide an exception to this requirement under current law.

DISCOVERY OF CIRCUMSTANCES

More often than not, staff discovers that a student may have an issue with meeting this requirement when he/she files a request for exception to the TOPS continuing eligibility requirements. On occasion, staff discovers the issue by virtue of a news article.

RESOLUTION

Whatever the source of the information, staff contacts the student and advises that he/she cannot be eligible for TOPS if he/she has a criminal conviction, and we request that he/she provide a letter from the court which has jurisdiction confirming the student's status. If the court states that the student has a conviction, he/she is no longer eligible for TOPS. If the court states that the student does not have a conviction, the student remains eligible for TOPS, assuming that all continuation requirements are met and/or that he/she requests and receives an exception to these requirements. If the court does not provide a letter, but staff has documentation evidencing that criminal charges have been filed, the student's file is held in pending status until the issue is resolved.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

Often, students facing a first criminal offense will be afforded the opportunity to enter a diversion program sponsored by the court which has jurisdiction. If the student enters and completes such a diversion program, he/she will not have a criminal conviction, and will therefore remain eligible for TOPS, assuming the continuation requirements for TOPS are met.

Students who enter a diversion program are often unable to meet the continuation requirements for their awards (enrolling full time; remaining enrolled in school; earning 24 hours each academic year). If students do not meet this requirement, they may request an exception. If the reason for failure to meet these requirements is based solely on the fact that they were completing a diversion program, the request for exception will be based on exceptional circumstances and will be reviewed by LOSFA staff, then by the LOSFA Advisory Board, and then reviewed by the Board of Regents for a final determination as to whether an exception should be granted.

Students who enter a rehabilitation program as part of a diversion program may request an exception based on substance abuse rehabilitation (whether the abuse is of alcohol or drugs). This type of exception is heard by LOSFA staff, and final approval will be granted if the appropriate documentation from a qualified rehabilitation facility is provided.

Students who are required to undergo extensive psychological treatment as a result of an act which would otherwise be considered criminal will request an exception based on temporary disability. Like an exception based on substance abuse rehabilitation, the file will be heard by LOSFA staff and final approval will be granted if the appropriate documentation is provided. In this case, the student's treating physician would need to provide a letter, on letterhead, verifying that the student was undergoing mental health treatment.

TOPS Website

For additional information regarding TOPS including eligibility and renewal, please refer to the

following website or call 1-800-259-5626

www.osfa.la.gov

Chafee Educational and Training Voucher (ETV Program)

The Chafee Educational and Training Voucher (ETV) Program awards up to \$9,000 annually (effective with the Fall 2021 due to the COVID pandemic) during the academic year to qualified students who have been in the foster care system so they can pursue an academic college education or technical and skill training in college to be prepared to enter the workforce. The actual award amount is determined by the student's financial need, which is calculated in accordance with the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended.

- Student indicates they are eligible for the Chafee Grant (for students who were in the Foster Care System).

- Student must have submitted a FAFSA and have a remaining need. Number of enrollment hours does not matter.

- Students are eligible for \$9000/year (\$4500/semester). Payment can be submitted for a summer as long as the student has not received \$9000. Payment may be submitted after the first day of school.

Submit payment to LOSFA. Log onto the LOSFA Award System.

- Click on Payment
- Click on Chafee Payment Requests
- Click on add (yellow)
- Enter student social security number
- Select Term (drop down box)
- Click on 'Find Student'
- Student's name, date of birth, address, telephone number and remaining funds for academic year will appear
- Enter Payment Request Amount
- Select Foster Care State
- Submit

LOSFA will forward the request to the Department of Family Services who will verify the student's eligibility. If approved, LOSFA will process payment and send funds to the school.