



THE STATE OF

FINANCIAL AID IN LOUISIANA



A Report of the Louisiana Financial Aid Working Group

NOVEMBER 2022



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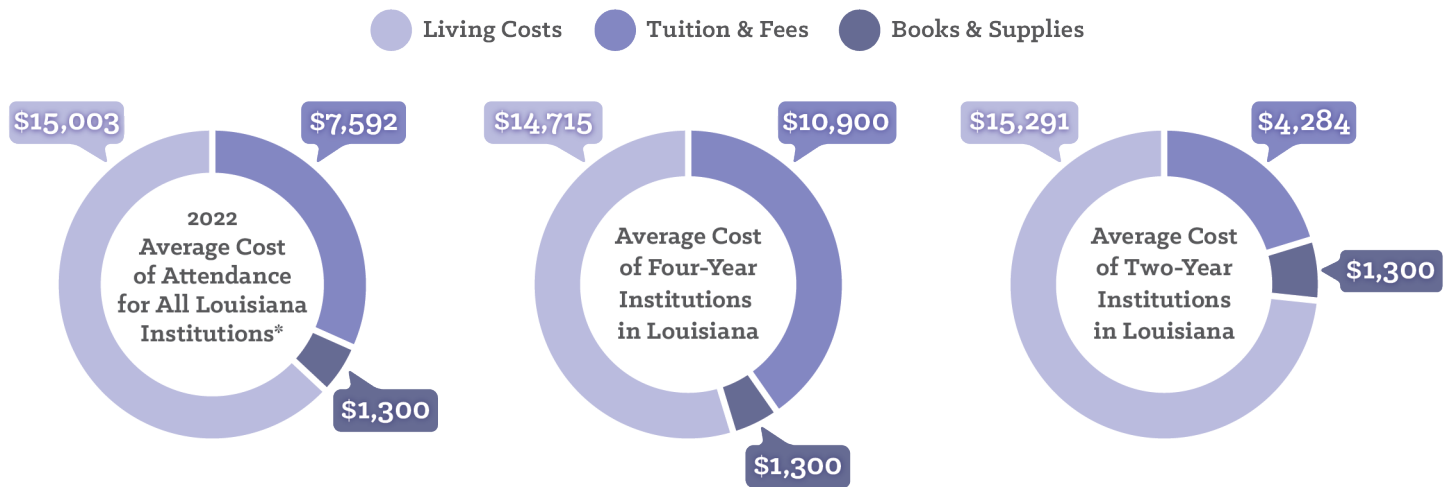
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POSTSECONDARY ACCESS IN LOUISIANA

The nation is experiencing fewer students enrolling in post-secondary education, and Louisiana is no different, but the state still managed to close out with 74% of seniors submitting the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). While Louisiana has made great progress, there still remain gaps in access to and completing college by socio-economic status, even amongst higher-achieving economically disadvantaged students. Some students who are eligible for aid still fail to submit FAFSA. FAFSA submission rates can be raised by providing education and personal assistance to students. Louisiana has created a policy around FAFSA submission and increased awareness about the importance of applying for financial aid to further postsecondary education.

POSTSECONDARY COSTS

One of the most prominent barriers to postsecondary education or training in Louisiana is cost. Too few students and families have the money to fund a four-year degree or industry training program without assistance.



*Source: [College Tuition Compare](#)

POSTSECONDARY FUNDING SOURCES

Louisiana students are afforded many state and federal financial aid options such as the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students to help combat the costs of postsecondary education and training.

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)

The FAFSA is a form prepared annually by current and prospective postsecondary students to determine their eligibility for student financial aid such as Pell grants, work study programs, and federal student loans. Students complete the FAFSA during their senior year of high school and again each year they are in a postsecondary institution to continue qualifying for aid. Early completion is encouraged since students may qualify for additional state or institutional aid.

Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS)

TOPS is a scholarship program for Louisiana residents who attend any of the following institutions:

- Louisiana public college or university;
- school in the Louisiana Community and Technical College System;
- approved proprietary and cosmetology schools;
- institutions in the Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities.

TOPS Opportunity, Performance, Honors, and Tech awards are based on a student's coursework, GPA and ACT score.

LOUISIANA'S PLAN FOR INCREASING POSTSECONDARY ACCESS

By not completing the FAFSA, Louisiana students forego millions each year in federal grants, state opportunities, and other postsecondary funding. Additionally, students who are awarded TOPS or other state scholarships still seek additional assistance with living expenses, textbooks, and academic fees.

IMPROVING STATE POLICY

These student financial aid gaps call for a comprehensive and sustainable approach to financial aid planning that will benefit all students equitably and preserve the attainment of postsecondary education for future generations.

In December of 2015 the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) approved a policy regarding postsecondary planning for graduating public high school seniors. The policy sought to increase student access to state and federal financial aid by requiring graduating seniors to either

- complete the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) application or the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);
- declare a hardship; or
- submit a waiver to the local school system.

These policies were made effective with the start of the 2017-2018 school year and applied to the Class of 2018.

IMPROVING STATEWIDE FINANCIAL AID PLANNING

In order to provide even greater access to financial aid for Louisiana's students, the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE) formed the Financial Aid Working Group to evaluate the state's financial aid application completion rates, identify deficiencies and solutions for communities with low completion rates, and provide a comprehensive list of recommendations to the LDOE on how to improve financial aid completion rates statewide. The Financial Aid working group continues to meet quarterly to analyze current trends and best practices in financial aid planning and create a network of resources for students around the state.

Specifically, the working group was charged with three tasks:

- 1 **Develop a state action plan to track school-level financial aid form completion and make recommendations to the Department regarding changes in policy or funding opportunities deemed necessary to ensure that the new policy is implemented with fidelity;**
- 2 **Support the Department in the ongoing identification of services and programs available for schools and families; and**
- 3 **Assist in the development of partnerships and alliances with financial aid-related support programs, services, and stakeholders.**

The Financial Aid Working Group will work through the 2022-2023 school year to increase FAFSA completion during the pandemic and encourage students to move on to postsecondary education, overcoming perceived barriers.

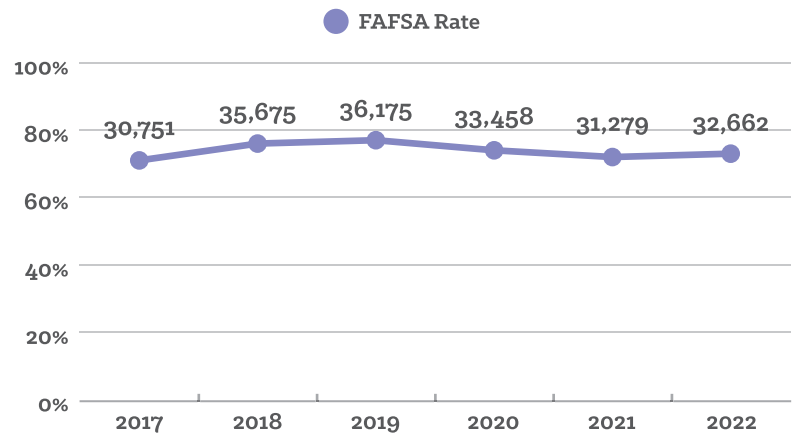
Additionally, the working group recommended that the LDOE publish an annual report, *The State of Financial Aid in Louisiana*, to report financial aid completion rates amongst high school seniors, and highlight those school systems and schools with the highest submission rates.

IMPROVING STATEWIDE FAFSA APPLICATION RATES¹

STATE/NATIONAL COMPARISONS

The National college Attainment Network (NCAN) reports that nationally FAFSA submission was down approximately 4 percent due to factors related to the pandemic. There was a 4 percent decline at Title I schools which serve predominately economically disadvantaged youth. Despite these obstacles, Louisiana had a 74 percent completion rate for all schools, public, and non-public, at the June 30, 2021 deadline, coming in second in the nation.

FAFSA SUBMISSION RATES FOR LOUISIANA PUBLIC SCHOOLS



STATE SUBMISSION DATA ANALYSIS

The state additionally analyses submission data by subgroup. Below are the results from the three years of policy implementation.

Identifier	June 30, 2020	June 30, 2021	June 30, 2022
All Public School Students	75%	71%	74%
Females	82%	87%	87%
Males	69%	76%	77%
TOPS University Diploma	84%	86%	89%
Jump Start Career Diploma	55%	63%	65%
Economically Disadvantaged	71%	78%	80%
Non-Economically Disadvantaged	82%	78%	87%
Special Education	53%	56%	76%
English Language Learners	34%	37%	44%
Homeless	76%	78%	81%
White	78%	83%	83%
Black	75%	83%	84%
Hispanic	57%	63%	69%
American Indian	72%	79%	81%
Asian	82%	90%	91%
Native Hawaii	78%	82%	83%
Multi Race	73%	82%	83%

NATIONAL COMPARISONS

The [National College Access Network \(NCAN\)](#) published the national completion rates and rank of all states by percent of growth since the previous year each week during the FAFSA cycle from October until the June 30, 2022 priority deadline. The data cut off point is the June 30 deadline, but many students went on to complete a FAFSA after this date, which is not reflected in this report. Since the implementation of the policy, Louisiana has finished at number one in the nation for FAFSA completions with the exception of 2020 where we were number two due to COVID waivers of policy. NCAN reported that 75 percent of students in Louisiana completed the FAFSA by the June 30 priority deadline.²

¹ The policy requiring students to complete a FAFSA or have a waiver is satisfied by having a legitimate submission. The vast majority of FAFSA submissions are ruled complete; however, there are some submissions with errors that students do not go back in to correct as their plans for higher education may have changed.
² NCAN combines both private and public school students in its FAFSA submission rate count.

SCHOOL SYSTEM COMPARISONS			
School System	Percent Submitted 2020-2021 Cycle	Percent Submitted 2021-2022 Cycle	Percent Submitted 2022-2023 Cycle
Acadia Parish	59%	57%	62%
Allen Parish	83%	72%	70%
Ascension Parish	76%	75%	85%
Assumption Parish	85%	88%	88%
Avoyelles Parish	85%	90%	91%
Beauregard Parish	69%	66%	63%
Beinville Parish	81%	70%	87%
Bossier Parish	62%	66%	66%
Caddo Parish	75%	69%	70%
Calcasieu Parish	62%	60%	59%
Caldwell Parish	64%	90%	86%
Cameron Parish	84%	57%	73%
Catahoula Parish	100%	84%	100%
Central Community School District	49%	74%	76%
City of Baker School District	76%	47%	53%
City of Bogalusa School District	85%	78%	81%
City of Monroe School District	79%	76%	83%
Claiborne Parish	49%	67%	64%
Concordia Parish	73%	82%	78%
DeSoto Parish	79%	81%	80%
East Baton Rouge Parish	75%	80%	93%
East Carroll Parish	88%	87%	77%
East Feliciana Parish	99%	78%	71%
Evangeline Parish	79%	76%	83%
Franklin Parish	62%	58%	58%
Grant Parish	68%	59%	61%
Iberia Parish	63%	57%	67%
Iberville Parish	92%	92%	90%
Jackson Parish	87%	76%	82%
Jefferson Davis Parish	85%	81%	76%
Jefferson Parish	65%	69%	78%
Lafayette Parish	74%	85%	81%
Lafourche Parish	78%	67%	70%
LaSalle Parish	59%	60%	73%
Lincoln Parish	95%	77%	71%
Livingston Parish	91%	81%	83%
Madison Parish	100%	74%	95%
Morehouse Parish	74%	64%	60%
Natchitoches Parish	83%	74%	92%
Orleans Parish	88%	70%	68%
Ouachita Parish	65%	62%	67%
Plaquemines Parish	96%	81%	83%
Pointe Coupee Parish	67%	63%	67%

SCHOOL SYSTEM COMPARISONS			
School System	Percent Submitted 2020-2021 Cycle	Percent Submitted 2021-2022 Cycle	Percent Submitted 2022-2023 Cycle
Rapides Parish	84%	79%	91%
Red River Parish	90%	77%	74%
Richland Parish	70%	69%	83%
Sabine Parish	73%	82%	90%
St. Bernard Parish	72%	83%	77%
St. Charles Parish	86%	77%	75%
St. Helena Parish	70%	66%	77%
St. James Parish	66%	82%	80%
St. John the Baptist Parish	93%	78%	86%
St. Landry Parish	74%	72%	70%
St. Martin Parish	65%	59%	69%
St. Mary Parish	69%	67%	67%
St. Tammany Parish	82%	74%	67%
Tanigipahoa Parish	73%	65%	79%
Tensas Parish	100%	67%	77%
Terrebonne Parish	59%	71%	73%
Union Parish	90%	94%	100%
Vermilion Parish	65%	65%	67%
Vernon Parish	88%	79%	85%
Washington Parish	78%	81%	88%
Webster Parish	64%	67%	62%
West Baton Rouge Parish	89%	74%	80%
West Carroll Parish	73%	58%	66%
West Feliciana Parish	90%	86%	84%
Winn Parish	85%	70%	79%
Zachary Community School District	79%	83%	68%

HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS	
School Name	Percent Submitted
Edward J Sam Accelerated School	100%
Sicily Island High School	100%
Northdale Superintendent's Academy	100%
Natchitoches Parish Technical And Career Center	100%
Georgetown High School	100%
West St. John High School	100%
Harrisonburg High School	100%
Avoyelles High School	100%
Gibsland-Coleman High School	100%
Jewel M. Sumner High School	100%
Gueydan High School	100%
Union Parish High School	100%
East Iberville Elementary/High School	100%
Block High School	100%
Concordia Education Center	100%
Elton High School	100%
Evans High School	100%
Florien High School	100%
French Settlement High School	100%
Glenmora High School	100%
Northeast Claiborne Charter	100%
Oak Hill High School	100%
Pitkin High School	100%
Varnado High School	98%
Haynes Academy School For Advanced Studies	98%
Patrick F. Taylor Science & Technology Academy	98%
Negreet High School	97%
Converse High School	96%
Mt. Hermon School	96%
Lafayette High School	96%
Dodson High School	95%
Madison High School	95%
Baton Rouge Magnet High School	95%
Lusher Charter School	95%
Hicks High School	95%
Thomas Jefferson High School For Advanced Studies	95%
David Thibodaux Stem Magnet Academy	95%
Magnet Academy For Cultural Arts	95%
Mamou High School	95%
Arcadia High School	94%
D'arbonne Woods Charter School	94%
Downsville Community Charter School	94%
Lake Charles College Prep	93%

HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS	
School Name	Percent Submitted
Hathaway High School	93%
Liberty Magnet High	93%
Natchitoches Central High School	93%
Mangham High School	93%
St. Amant High School	92%
Caddo Parish Magnet High School	92%
Donaldsonville High School	92%
Lsu Laboratory School	92%
Hornbeck High School	92%
Plaquemine Senior High School	91%
Saline High School	91%
Benjamin Franklin High School	90%
Amite High Magnet	90%
New Orleans Center For Creative Arts	90%
Abramson Science And Technology School	90%
Weston High School	90%
Madison Preparatory Academy	90%
Monterey High School	90%
Plainview High School	89%
Zwolle High School	89%
Pickering High School	89%
Delhi Charter School	89%
Ebarb School	89%
Holden High School	89%
Huntington High School	89%
Choudrant High School	88%
Dutchtown High School	88%
St. James High School	88%
Live Oak High School	88%
Oakdale High School	88%
La School For Ag Science	88%
Rosepine High School	88%
Assumption High School	88%
Franklinton High School	87%
North Caddo High School	87%
Stanley High School	87%
Tioga High School	87%
Pleasant Hill High School	87%
Louisiana School For Math Science & The Arts	86%
Ferriday High School	86%
Denham Springs High School	86%
Rapides High School	86%
Caldwell Parish High School	86%

HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS	
School Name	Percent Submitted
Montgomery High School	86%
Southern University Lab School	86%
Northwood High School	85%
Wossman High School	85%
Marksville High School	85%
H. L. Bourgeois High School	85%
Kentwood High Magnet School	85%
Calvin High School	85%
Ringgold High School	85%
Maurepas School	85%
West Feliciana High School	84%
Mentorship Academy Of Science & Technology	84%
West Jefferson High School	84%
Belle Chasse High School	84%
Sterlington High School	84%
Northside High School	84%
Delhi High School	83%
Grand Isle High School	83%
C.e. Byrd High School	83%
Edna Karr High School	83%
Early College Academy	83%
Leesville High School	83%
East St. John High School	83%
North Desoto High School	83%
Carroll High School	83%
Pine School	83%
Port Barre High School	83%
Louisiana Virtual Charter Academy	83%
Loranger High School	82%
Ville Platte High School	82%
Many High School	82%
Lakeview Jr./Sr. High School	82%
Port Allen High School	82%
Simpson High School	82%
Alexandria Senior High School	82%
Delcambre High School	82%
Neville High School	82%
Lakeshore High School	82%
Beekman Charter School	81%
Northshore High School	81%
Bunkie Magnet High School	81%
South Plaquemines High School	81%
Js Clark Leadership Academy	81%

HIGH-PERFORMING SCHOOLS	
School Name	Percent Submitted
Bogalusa High School	81%
Buckeye High School	81%
Logansport High School	80%
Riverdale High School	80%
Jonesboro-Hodge High School	80%
Breaux Bridge High School	80%
Hahnville High School	80%
Avoyelles Public Charter School	80%
Fontainebleau High School	80%

APPENDIX: FAFSA DATA COLLECTION

Currently the only source for public school only FAFSA data besides self-reporting is on the USDOE website. Weekly/bi-weekly USDOE data can be found at <https://studentaid.ed.gov/sa/about/data-center/student/application-volume/fafsa-completion-high-school>.

While USDOE data is informative, it does have some limitations. Some of the limitations of USDOE data include

- Students can submit multiple applications using different identifying information
- Students who are overage fall within the current definition of a senior (beginning in January, first-time submitters up to 19 years old were present in data)
- School can have a change in the official count of seniors during the current school year
- School is listed more than one time in the data with name variations
- School has less than 10 seniors and are therefore not included in reporting
- School has 5 or fewer applications on file and not included in school reporting but included in district reporting

Beginning with the 2017-2018 school year, USDOE submitted applications were matched with official state data in the Student Transcript System to indicate that students have met graduation requirements.

The LDOE uses USDOE data to calculate FAFSA data for Louisiana public schools. The data included in this report reflects the number of FAFSAs submitted among first-time filing applicants at the cutoff date who will have received their high school diploma by the start of the school year for which they are applying for aid.

The LDOE data uses USDOE reported numbers and school system self reporting and calculates based on the number of actual graduates in the Student Transcript System (STS). This data is reported by numbers submitted, divided by the number of graduates. Final district and school year percentages are calculated on the state/national priority deadline for FAFSA submission as of June 30. The Department communicates data to the field through School System Support teams each week.

FAFSA data on public and nonpublic school completions can be found at the National College Access Network's (NCAN) Form Your Future FAFSA Tracker (<https://formyourfuture.org/fafsa-tracker/>).