

COUNSELOR CONNECT



A Publication for Louisiana's
Professional School Counselors



December 2023

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Student Opportunities

From LOSFA: ACT Discount Code

Please share with principals, counselors, teachers, and testing coordinators.

Students who paid to register* for the December 2023 ACT received a discount code that can be used to take another ACT® test for **FREE**.

Students must redeem their ACT discount code by January 31, 2024. The ACT test® discount code can be used for the following 2024 test dates: February 10, April 13, June 8, and July 13.

The ACT late registration deadline for February's ACT is Friday, January 19.

Visit the [link](#) for more information about the ACT.

Please email rhonda.bridevaux@la.gov or call 225-219-7597.

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FAFSA for December 2023 Graduates and FAFSA Resources

Please share with school counselors and those responsible for FAFSA completion.

Per the Louisiana Department of Education (LDOE), the 2023-2024 FAFSA® won't satisfy the graduation requirement for your mid year graduates. Due to the uncertainty of the 2024-2025 FAFSA® release date, it is recommended that students complete the [TOPS Online Application](#), which also fulfills the graduation requirement.

Additional FAFSA Resources

- The National College Attainment Network (NCAN) has a page devoted to the Better FAFSA®. Click [here](#) to access webinars, FAQs, and other Better FAFSA® resources.
- NCAN also has a [Better FAFSA Awareness Toolkit](#) full of resources and tools that you can use to communicate with your students and families.
- Access training and other resources related to the Better FAFSA® on the Federal Student Aid (FSA) [website](#).
- What changed for the 2024-2025 FAFSA form video. Click [here](#)
- How to create a FSA ID video. Click [here](#)
- Who is a contributor on the 2024-2025 FAFSA video. Click [here](#)
- Understand and prepare FAFSA forms for contributors' video. Click [here](#)
- What does it mean to provide consent and approval on the 2024-2025 FAFSA form. Click [here](#).

Virtual Office Hours: LOSFA offers support to students and their families five days a week through [virtual office hours](#), beginning 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Please contact ldefinancialaid@la.gov with any questions.

Financial Aid Planning

Please share with school counselors and those responsible for FAFSA completion.

All 2024 graduating seniors must complete one of the following:

- Complete [2024-2025 FAFSA](#) application (if you want to apply for the federal Pell grant, federal student loans, the Louisiana GO Grant, and TOPS)
- Fill out a [TOPS application](#) on the LOSFA website (if you want TOPS only)
- Submit an [opt-out non participation form](#)
- Complete and have a [hardship waiver](#) on file

The U.S. Department of Education is revamping the FAFSA application. The 2024-2025 application will open in **December 2023** instead of October 2023 (**this year only**).

Please contact ldefinancialaid@la.gov with any questions.

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2024-2025 FAFSA Roadmap

Please share with school system leaders, school counselors, students and families.

The 2024–2025 *Free Application for Federal Student Aid* (FAFSA®) includes unprecedented changes to how students and families apply for federal student aid and how we determine eligibility, giving students a better and simpler experience with the FAFSA form. Improvements include a direct data exchange with the IRS for income data elements, a new “Who’s My Parent?” wizard, and a single consolidated portal for all FAFSA help resources.

To help ensure that students and families—and the partners critical to getting student aid dollars into the hands of students—are best prepared for a successful [2024–2025 FAFSA cycle](#), we have launched the [Better FAFSA Better Future Roadmap](#). Please note that the 2024-2025 FAFSA will be available in December 2023.

Please contact ldfinancialaid@la.gov with any questions.

Professional Opportunities/Monthly Calls

2024 Jump Start Convention and Child Welfare and Attendance Summit

Please share with school system leaders, high school administrators, school counselors and child welfare and attendance stakeholders.

[Registration](#) is now open for the 2024 Jump Start Convention and Child Welfare and Attendance Summit. This one-day event will be held on **Tuesday, January 23, 2024** at the **Cajundome and Convention Center in Lafayette, LA**. This year’s conference will provide professional development opportunities around career and technical education, workforce readiness, and child welfare and attendance.

Please contact jumpstart@la.gov with any questions.

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2024 Teacher Leader Summit

Please share with school system leaders, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

The 2024 Teacher Leader Summit is an annual professional learning conference that brings together Louisiana birth to grade 12 educators and content experts. Educators participating in the event will share their knowledge, learn new skills, and prepare for the 2024-2025 school year. This year's Teacher Leader Summit will focus on our ability to lead the next level every single day. **School Counselors** are encouraged to attend, as several sessions within the Office of Career and College Readiness will be curated for their work streams.

- The TL Summit will take place from **May 28 - May 30, 2024** at the New Orleans Ernest N. Morial Convention Center (NOENMCC) in New Orleans, LA.
- Registration for this event will open on **January 5, 2024**, and will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. As space is limited, it is **strongly encouraged** to register early.
- Registration Fees: \$175 (Early Bird; ends February 2, 2024); \$200 (Regular)

Please contact events@emergentmethod.com with questions.

Child Welfare and Attendance Monthly Call

Please share with Child Welfare and Attendance (CWA) directors, supervisors, and all attendance stakeholders.

CWAs are provided with relevant professional development, resources, and tools to support students and families within their systems. As members of the Louisiana Attendance Alliance, CWAs are afforded evidence-based, best-practices to address chronic absence and family engagement during these meetings. This opportunity for learning and collaboration is held the first Thursday of each month.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursday, December 7; 8 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92031673778?>
- **Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Webinar ID:** 920 3167 3778
- **Passcode:** 459079

Please contact shelneka.adams@la.gov with questions.

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New Fast Forward Pathway and Course Codes

Please share with CTE supervisors, principals, counselors, and secondary supervisors.

Postsecondary Readiness will host a webinar discussing the recent updates to the Fast Forward Pathways and Course Codes. The new codes became effective during the 2023-2024 school year.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Wednesday, December 13; 9 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/94894150597>
- **Webinar Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 948 9415 0597
- **Passcode:** 496383

Please contact caronda.bean@la.gov with questions.

Alternative Education Leaders Community of Practice

Please share with Alternative Education Supervisors, Site Leaders and all AE stakeholders.

A webinar for Alternative Education Supervisors and Site Leaders is held the second Thursday of each month and focuses on supporting AE sites leaders with the delivery of criteria outlined in Bulletin 131.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Thursday, December 14; 10 a.m. - 11 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/94546407532?>
- **Phone Number:** 312-626-6799
- **Webinar ID:** 945 4640 7532
- **Passcode:** 764614

Please contact terran.perry@la.gov with questions.

Office of Career and College Readiness Monthly Call

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

A monthly webinar hosted by the Office of Career and College Readiness is held at 3 p.m. the 3rd Thursday of the month, and focuses on sharing updates around the various work streams within the office. Slide decks from previous calls may be found in the [Monthly Call Library](#).

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Paused for December; will resume January 18; 3 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:** <https://ldoe.zoom.us/j/92322549210>
- **Phone Number:** (312) 626-6799
- **Meeting ID:** 923 2254 9210
- **Passcode:** 130834

Please contact erica.spencer@la.gov with questions.

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2024 Louisiana ACT Summit

Please share with principals, counselors, teachers, and testing coordinators.

[Registration](#) is open for the 2024 Louisiana ACT Summit. The Summit will provide attendees with the opportunity to gain new perspectives, expand their knowledge, and find solutions to problems facing the education and workforce landscape.

- Date: February 1, 2024
- Location: Pennington Biomedical Research Facility; Baton Rouge, LA
- Cost: \$135 (non members) and \$125 (State organization members)

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov for more information.

College Board Weekly Office Hours

Please share with principals, counselors, AP teachers, and testing coordinators.

The College Board is offering weekly office hours starting on August 8. Topics will include the AP 2024 exam schedule and digital AP exams. Please feel free to join the weekly discussion on any questions that you have about AP exams and resources.

- **Webinar Date and Time:** Every Tuesday; 10 a.m.
- **Webinar Link:** [Microsoft Teams Meeting Link](#)
- **Webinar ID:** 232 293 189 414
- **Passcode:** 7VQcYk

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov for more information.

Apply to be an AP Reader in 2024

Please share with principals, counselors, AP teachers, and testing coordinators.

The College Board is offering the opportunity to become an [AP Exam Reader](#). The opportunity is open to all authorized AP high school teachers who are currently teaching AP subjects, regardless of years of experience. [Applications](#) are accepted year round, but spots are limited.

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov for more information.

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Reminders

SCA Spring Reporting

Please share with CTE supervisors, secondary supervisors, school administrators and counselors.

The [SCA Portal](#) will **reopen** for spring reporting on **November 20**. School systems are to register with the course provider then report the enrollments in the [SCA Portal](#). The portal will **close for spring reporting** on **January 22 at 5 p.m.** for enrollments with private providers and on **March 11** for Public Higher Education providers.

Please contact sca@la.gov with questions.

Fast Forward

Please share with secondary supervisors, CTE supervisors, and secondary principals, assistant principals, and school counselors.

The [Fast Forward Program](#) will prepare students for current and emerging professions that expose students to high-skill, high-wage and in-demand occupations. It will assist with establishing statewide industry or sector partnerships among local educational agencies and institutions of higher education, and facilitate the establishment, expansion and integration of opportunities for students to successfully complete coursework that integrates rigorous and challenging technical and academic instruction.

Contact caronda.bean@la.gov with questions.

Proficiency by Exam/Portfolio

Please share with school system administrators and counselors.

Bulletin 741 §2314. Carnegie Credit and Credit Flexibility contains a policy concerning student's earning proficiency credit by exam or portfolio.

- Per policy, school systems must [report](#) exams/portfolios used to award credit by proficiency
- Students may only earn credit by exam or portfolio in a course in which **they have never been enrolled and received no formal instruction**

Contact stephanie.marcum@la.gov with questions.

Community Service Diploma Endorsement

Please share with school system administrators and counselors.

Students have the opportunity to earn 80 hours of community service during their high school years and earn the [Community Service Diploma Endorsement](#). Visit the [Diploma Endorsement webpage](#) for more information.

Please contact suzette.rabalais@la.gov with questions.

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2023-2024 Graduate Diploma and Seal Orders

Please share with principals, school counselors, and data coordinators.

Please use the [Diploma and Seal Order Form](#) to submit an order for the 2023-2024 graduates. The order form is open and ready for orders to be placed. All diploma and seal requests must be submitted through the electronic form. The deadline to submit orders is **February 2, 2024**. Only one form should be completed for each school system. The Department will cover the costs for the initial order and distribution request that are received by the due date.

For more information, please contact suzette.rabalais@la.gov.

Resources

2023-2024 ACT Counselor's Guide

Please share with administrators, counselors, and testing coordinators.

ACT is offering a **free** [Counselor's Guide for the 2023-2024 school year](#). The guide will provide information regarding national offerings of the ACT test, tools and resources to help support students, season-based timelines for juniors and seniors, test preparation, and so much more.

Please contact charmaine.cureton@la.gov with questions.

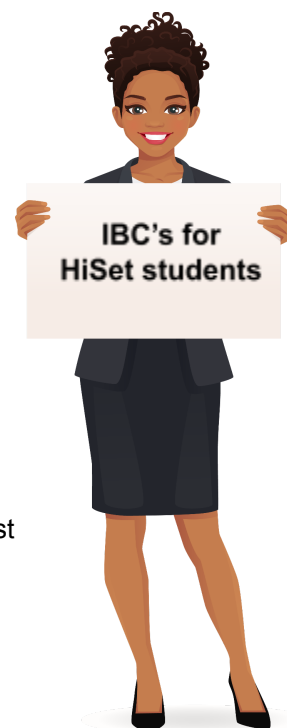
Ask CoCo

Q & A With COounselor COnnect!

Q: Can you clarify if a student earns their HiSet and a jump start credential if the credential can be at any level or a specific level (emerging/regional, basic, or advanced)?

- The "I Want to be Clear" Counselor

A: Per the LDOE Accountability department, the IBC's for HiSet students have to be at least basic/statewide—essentially it has to count for points for the grads for it to count for points for nongraduates.



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Scholarships/Funding Opportunities

[NROTC \\$200,000 Scholarship Opportunity](#)

Contact: Grant Smith, NROTC Scholarship Coordinator for specific information at grant.r.smith14.mil@us.navy.mil.

[Supply Chain Management Major Scholarship](#) (Southeastern Louisiana University)

Degrees in supply chain management are in high demand, and companies are seeking college graduates that understand logistics, operations management, planning and forecasting, sourcing, systems integration, and data analytics. These jobs have been identified as five-star jobs by the Louisiana Workforce Commission, and average starting pay is higher than most other college majors.

[The Home Depot Foundation Path to Pro Scholarship](#)

[Louisiana State University Top Merit Scholarships](#)

[\\$2,000 No Essay CollegeVine Scholarship](#)

[Joanne Pransky Celebration of Women in Robotics](#)

Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange Vocational Scholarship

Application deadline of December 1 has been extended to December 15 for Louisiana students.

[More info and application materials](#) for the August 2024-June 2025 program are available.

The Congress-Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) Vocational Scholarship is an opportunity for U.S. students to spend a gap year in Germany on a government scholarship, learning German, going to school, and gaining internship experience, all while living with a host family.

Key applicant qualifications include:

- Current high school senior
- U.S. citizenship
- ≥ 2.4 GPA (German language skills not required)

The program is open to all types of students: those interested in college, or in trade school / apprenticeship, or those wanting to jump right into the work world.

CBYX encourages applicants from all backgrounds, ethnic groups, gender identities, geographical locales, races, religions, sexual orientations, and socioeconomic groups.

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Contact Our Office

Office of Career and College Readiness Contact Information

highschoolacademics@la.gov	General questions about the office and about graduation requirements
ldefinancialaid@la.gov	Questions related to the financial aid policy or for assistance with FAFSA completion
sca@la.gov	Questions related to Supplemental Course Allocation/Course Choice
jumpstart@la.gov	Questions related to Jump Start
healthyschools@la.gov	Questions related to healthy schools, healthy communities, and whole child
ppp@la.gov	Questions related to pupil progression

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