

College Admissions/Financial Aid Timeline

Freshman Year/9th Grade

September

- Familiarize yourself with the [LOSFA College Payment Plan](#) and discuss with your parents
 - [Begin Researching Scholarships](#)
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Sophomore Year/10th Grade

September

- [Continue to Research Scholarships](#)

January

- Research the [Early Start Program](#) and apply at the end of your 10th grade year if interested.
 - Register to take the [ACT Plan Assessment](#) or the [PSAT](#)
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Junior Year/11th Grade

Summer

- **Investigate careers of interest.**
Consider subjects you do well in and enjoy. Talk to your parents, guidance counselor, and other adults about the careers that interest you. The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Outlook Handbook (www.bls.gov/oco/) can also help you identify careers of interest.
- **Approach professionals and trades people with questions.**
Find some family friends, friends of friends, friends of teachers, and leaders in the community who work in the careers that interest you. Ask them about their work. You will learn a lot about the careers that would best suit you.
- **Make a list of important factors.**
Think about what factors are the most important to you when considering

your future college. Some examples are programs of study offered, school size, class size, city and neighborhood, campus culture, distance from home, extracurricular activities, religious affiliation, and cost of attendance.

- **Research colleges.**

Based on what you've learned about careers and your own interests, look for colleges with programs that can help you achieve your goals. Search for your program interests using online resources. Take note of which colleges offer the kinds of programs you want. Also, your high school's guidance counseling office, teachers, library, and the public library will have materials to help you.

- **Make a list of prospective colleges.**

Check [here](#) for a listing of Louisiana Colleges and Universities.

- **Request materials.**

Go online or call the colleges to request catalogs and financial aid materials.

- **Attend college and/or career fairs.**

Seek out the colleges that interest you and ask about the programs you've identified to determine if the college will help you achieve your goals.

- **Narrow your list.**

Based on what you've learned, narrow your list of schools. If possible, rank your colleges in order of preference.

August

- **Ensure that you will graduate.**

Look at your high school's graduation requirements and compare your credits. Make sure you will graduate on time.

- **Inquire about getting college credit while in high school through the [Early Start Program](#).**

- **Research private scholarship and grant opportunities.**

This information is available at your high school guidance office, local public library, civic and professional organizations and [free scholarship searches](#). Look specifically for scholarships that might apply to your career goals, skills, or demographics.

October

- **Take the PSAT/NMSQT.**

Take these tests to practice taking admissions tests and to establish your eligibility for the National Merit Scholarship Program, the National Achievement Scholarship Program, and/or the National Hispanic Recognition Program, and additional scholarship programs.

- **Make a list of entrance requirements.**

Look up the minimum acceptance requirements for entering freshmen at your top colleges, such as grade point average, high school subject credits, and standardized test scores.

- **Talk with your parents about your college plans and finances.**

Become more specific about how you and your parents can finance your plans.

- **Meet with your guidance counselor.**

After your PSAT/NMSQT scores come in, schedule a meeting. Bring your list of entrance requirements. Determine with the counselor if your list of colleges is reasonable or needs to be adjusted, and if your current and future high school classes are appropriate.

January - June

- **As you learn more, narrow your list.**

Continue to attend college fairs and, if possible, schedule individual sessions with representatives from your top colleges to learn more about their programs.

- **Take the ACT and/or SAT.**

If these tests are required for your list of colleges, register and take them. (Enter the proper code so that LOSFA receives your scores)

- **Take achievement tests.**

Take these in May or June if the colleges that you are considering require them. At this point, the material is fresh in your mind.

- **Start preparing portfolios, audition tapes, writing samples, or other evidence of talent.**

If these are required for admission to your programs or scholarships, begin working on these now.

July - August

- **Request information.**

Contact the colleges that interest you and request admissions procedures and financial aid information.

- **Visit colleges.**

Are you planning travel during summer vacation? Many families visit college campuses on their vacation trips. Call the admissions office in advance to learn what times they conduct regular tours. Then, use these visits to compare campuses and help narrow your selection.

Senior Year/12th Grade

September

- **Review your plans with your guidance counselor.**

Discuss your grades and test results from junior year.

- **Register to retake the ACT and/or SAT, if necessary.**

You can take these tests as many times as you want through the April national testing date in the year you will graduate from high school. You should take these exams at least six weeks before your earliest college admissions or financial aid deadline.

- **Make a final list of the colleges that interest you.**

Request admissions, housing, and financial aid information from each of these colleges.

- **Investigate financial aid.** Start investigating federal, state, college, and local financial aid opportunities.

- **Males - register with the U.S. Selective Service.**

If you are a male, age 18-25, register with the U.S. Selective Service so you will be eligible for federal student aid. You can register online at: www.sss.gov , at your high school, or at your post office.

- **Begin requesting letters of recommendation from teachers/counselors etc.**

October

- **Visit the colleges that most interest you.**

Arrange, in advance, for a personal interview with an admissions counselor, financial aid officer, and a professor in the academic department representing your intended major. If possible, stay overnight and talk with current students. If you cannot visit the campus, the college's

Web site may contain an online tour or a link to request an informational CD.

- **Start drafts of your college essays.**

- **Request high school transcripts.**

You will need a high school transcript for each application you plan to submit.

- **Register for a Personal Identification Number (PIN).**

Go to www.pin.ed.gov to register for a PIN. Your PIN serves as your e-Signature for the online Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA). If you are a dependent student, a parent should also register for a PIN at this time.

- **Plan to attend financial aid meetings in your community.**

There are meetings in many communities to help you understand the financial aid process and provide assistance with filing the FAFSA. Find out when these events are held by checking with your counselor or a local college.

November

- **Identify references.**

Ask if they will provide letters of recommendation for you.

- **Finalize portfolios, audition tapes, or writing samples.**

Complete these if they are required for admissions or scholarships.

- **Schedule admissions interviews.**

If your colleges recommend them, schedule these now.

- **Begin to prepare for the FAFSA.**

If you do not plan to file the FAFSA online, download the PDF FAFSA at www.FederalStudentAid.ed.gov or call 1.800.4.FED.AID to obtain a paper FAFSA. You cannot submit your FAFSA until after January 1 of your senior year in high school.

- **Apply for private scholarship and grant programs.**

December

- **Follow up with your references.**

Make sure they remembered to send in the forms if they are sent separately from your application.

- **Complete revisions of all applications and essays.**

Review them with a parent or guidance counselor.

- **Submit all revised, complete admissions and college academic scholarship applications before holiday break.**

Keep copies for your file. If you submit your applications online, verify that they were received.

January

- **File your FAFSA online at www.fafsa.ed.gov, or complete and mail your PDF FAFSA or paper FAFSA.**

Do this as soon as possible after January 1. Submit the FAFSA in time to meet each college's financial aid deadline. (These can vary and can be different than admissions deadlines.) Contact the financial aid offices at your colleges for more information. The Louisiana FAFSA deadline is July 1 for TOPS scholarships as well as all other scholarships administered by LOSFA. If you file a FAFSA online using www.fafsa.ed.gov, make sure to complete the process by submitting and printing the confirmation page. Save the printout of the confirmation page for your records and verification.

- **Continue researching scholarships that might be available to you.**

- **Send your mid-year grades to the colleges of your choice.**

February

- **Confirm receipt of your information.**

Check with your colleges to be sure they have received the information from your FAFSA and any revised ACT and/or SAT test scores.

- **Attend College Goal Sunday event in your area.**

For more information, go to www.osfa.la.gov.

March

- **Look for your Student Aid Report (SAR) in the mail.**

You should receive it within four to six weeks after filing the paper FAFSA, or two to four weeks after filing the online FAFSA . Each college that you included on your FAFSA will receive a copy of your SAR.

- **Review the SAR.**

Make any necessary changes and return the corrected form to the Department of Education. If you filed electronically, make corrections online. Contact your college for more directions if necessary.

- **Look for admissions responses.**

These will start coming in the mail from your colleges.

- **Tie up loose ends.**

If required, send any additional information to the colleges to complete the admissions and/or financial aid process.

April

- **Review your award letters.**

You should receive financial aid award letters from the colleges that have accepted you for admission. Review them with your parents or a trusted advisor. Be sure that you understand the terms and conditions that accompany each type of aid.

- **Weigh your options and make your decision.**

- **Notify the colleges of your final decision.**

Each college that accepted you for enrollment needs to know whether you plan to accept or decline its offer. Follow the colleges' instructions to let them know your final decision.

- **Look for summer jobs to help with college costs.**

May

- **Take Advanced Placement (AP) exams.**

If you'd like to take AP exams or they're required for your colleges, take them in May.

- **Send in your financial aid forms.**

Sign your financial aid award letter and any other items requiring your signature, and return them. If you have questions, schedule an appointment with a financial aid officer. If you have decided to accept a

loan, understand all your rights and responsibilities before you and/or your parents sign.

- **Send letters of decline to financial aid offices.**

If you have received financial aid award letters from colleges whose offers you have decided to decline, notify the financial aid office in writing because other students will need the aid you declined.

- **Arrange for housing and meals at the college you will attend.**

If necessary, arrange for housing and a meal plan for the fall.

- **Update the college on your financial aid situation.**

Notify the financial aid office of any outside scholarships, grants, or other kinds of student aid from private sources that you have received since you submitted your aid application.

- **Send your final transcript.**

Your college will need confirmation of your graduation.

Summer

- **Work and save.**

Make a plan for saving a portion of your summer earnings.

- **Make a budget.**

Prepare a budget for your freshman year in college.

- **Attend orientation at your new college.**

Make plans to attend required summer orientation sessions at the college.