

LOSFA's Go Alliance Academy

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) will host the LOSFA Go Alliance Academy. The LOSFA Go Alliance is a series of online courses where participants will learn to address topics that are important in college and career readiness including creating a college-going culture, financial aid, college applications and college/career planning. The courses are developed for practicing professional school counselors, pre-service school counselors, college access advisors, teachers and administrators. Additionally, the sessions help participants develop approaches for communicating and working with low-income students, those who would be first in the family to attend college and diverse populations to remove barriers to high aspirations and achievement.

LOSFA, in partnership with the Louisiana Counseling Association, will offer receive **30 Continuing Education Units (CEUs)** for those who successfully complete the courses.

Financial Aid and College Application (High School)

This course will begin Sunday, October 2, 2016 and end Sunday, December 4, 2016. The four sessions in this module include: Guiding Parents and Students through the Complexities of Financial Aid, Assisting with the Financial Aid Process, Preparing for College Admissions Tests, and College Admissions: The Application Process. This module is divided into five, one-week sessions: an orientation and four content sessions. Each session will provide participants with readings and resources to increase their background knowledge and understanding, activities that help them apply their new knowledge and online discussions to encourage interaction and reflection among course participants. You will need between four to five hours each week to complete the work in each session.

College and Career Advising Middle Grades (Middle School)

This course will begin Sunday, October 2, 2016 and end Sunday, December 11, 2016. The six sessions in this module address the skills and knowledge required to counsel middle grade students for college and careers. This module consists of six one-week sessions plus an orientation. Participants will be engaged in building knowledge and skills in several areas including the creation of a college-going culture, the value and affordability of postsecondary education, career exploration, using data to support student success, academic planning and transitions from elementary to middle and middle to high school, and developing academic mindsets and skills. Each session will provide participants with readings and resources to increase their background knowledge and understanding, activities that help apply new knowledge and online discussions to encourage interaction and reflection among course participants. You will need between four to five hours each week to complete the work in each session.

Space is extremely limited, and participants will be enrolled on a first-come, first-serve basis. If you are interested in applying to participate in one of the two courses, please fill out the application via the link below:

<https://form.jotform.com/62556631864968>.

FAFSA Completion Project

The FAFSA completion project is a federal initiative to encourage all high school seniors to complete the FAFSA. To participate, school boards, charter schools, and non-public schools must enter agreements with LOSFA that ensure that all data exchanged is handled in a secure manner and will be used only as intended. Public school boards will enter the agreement on behalf of all public schools within the district, and charter schools and non-public schools will enter individual agreements. The only data that will transfer between the agency and the school boards/schools is the student's name and whether the student has completed the FAFSA. Personally identifiable information will not be exchanged. LOSFA will not exchange data with those school boards/schools that do not enter an agreement; these schools will still be able to receive aggregate data from the USDOE. The benefit to this project is that the school boards/schools receive student level data so that they know how to follow up and with whom.

Questions about the FAFSA Completion Project can be sent to Rhonda Bridevaux (Rhonda.Bridevaux@la.gov).

FAFSA Becomes Available October 1

The 2017-2018 FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) will become available on October 1, 2016. The FAFSA needs to be completed by current high school seniors and current college students. The 2017-2018 FAFSA will use prior-prior year (PPY) tax data, so students and parents will provide their 2015 tax information. The FAFSA acts as the application for federal aid programs including the Pell Grant, Federal Work Study Program, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grant (FSEOG) and Stafford Loans (subsidized, unsubsidized and parent PLUS loans). The FAFSA also acts as the application for state aid programs including the Taylor Opportunity Program for Students (TOPS) and the Louisiana Go Grant.

Signal Vine Text Messaging Reminders

The Louisiana Office of Student Financial Assistance (LOSFA) provides text messages to convey critical college access information to high school seniors. High school seniors who elect to receive text messages will receive reminders of ACT/SAT testing registration deadlines, college application preparation assistance, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) completion assistance, financial aid/college access information and reminders of fee payment deadlines for college applications, housing applications and orientation applications.

Interested seniors can opt-in to the Signal Vine text messaging platform by emailing their name, high school name and cell phone number to LOSFA.SignalVine@la.gov