

# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors



**November 2023**

[Student Opportunities](#)

[Professional Opportunities/Monthly Calls](#)

[Resources](#)

[Reminders](#)

[Ask Coco](#)

[Scholarships/Funding Opportunities](#)

[Contact Our Office](#)

## Student Opportunities

### **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®](#). Select the link 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](#).

**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 [ldfinancialaid@la.gov](mailto:ldfinancialaid@la.gov) with any questions.

# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors

## **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 [ldfinancialaid@la.gov](mailto:ldfinancialaid@la.gov) with any questions.

## **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](mailto:ldfinancialaid@la.gov) with any 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](mailto:caronda.bean@la.gov) with questions.

# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors



## Professional Opportunities/Monthly Calls

### **2024 Louisiana ACT Summit**

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

[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.

**When:** February 1, 2024

**Where:** Pennington Biomedical Research Facility; Baton Rouge, LA

**Cost:** \$135 (non members) and \$125 (State organization members)

Please contact [charmaine.cureton@la.gov](mailto:charmaine.cureton@la.gov) with questions.

### **ASCA Webinar: Build School-Based College Preparation Supports: Hosting a FAFSA Completion Event**

**Please share with school counselors and staff that support FAFSA completion.**

With FAFSA simplification, there are some key changes coming to the 2024–2025 form graduating seniors will need support navigating. The new form is being released in December 2023, and the National College Attainment Network (NCAN) can prepare you to help students and families complete the form. Get a line-by-line review of the new form, address updates to the FSA ID process for individuals without Social Security numbers. Review the FAFSA Submission Summary (formerly the Student Aid Report), and learn about resources and tools available from the U.S. Department of Education's Federal Student Aid office and NCAN. Hear recommendations for building FAFSA completion support into your school's college-going efforts.

- **Webinar Date:** November 15
- **Webinar Time:** 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- **Webinar Link:**  
<https://videos.schoolcounselor.org/sponsored-webinar-build-schoolbased-college-preparation-supports-for-students-hosting-a-fafsa-com/>



# COUNSELOR CONNECT

## A Publication for Louisiana's Professional School Counselors



### **Fall 2023 Counselor Institute Presentations/Resources**

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

Thank you to everyone who attended the Fall Counselor Institute sessions, we truly enjoyed seeing you again! The [presentation](#) is now available for your reference. The Board of Regents' [presentation](#) along with other [dual enrollment resources](#) are also available.

The [Louisiana Dual Enrollment Portal](#) contains information to help students, families and counselors access dual enrollment opportunities throughout the state. Dates for the Spring 2024 Counselor Institutes will be shared at a later date.

Contact [angela.jordan@la.gov](mailto:angela.jordan@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:** November 16; 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](mailto:erica.spencer@la.gov) 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, November 2 ; 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](mailto:shelneka.adams@la.gov) with questions.

# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors

## **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, November 9; 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](mailto:terran.perry@la.gov) with questions.

## **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](mailto: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](mailto:charmaine.cureton@la.gov) for more information.

# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors

## Reminders

### **Diploma and Seal Orders**

**Please share with secondary supervisors and school system leaders.**

The [Diploma and Seal Order Form](#) will open **December 4** for school systems to request diplomas for the 2024 high school graduates. The electronic order form will be due **Friday, February 2, 2024**.

Only one form should be submitted for each school system. The Department will cover the cost of the initial order and distribution.

Please contact [suzette.rabalais@la.gov](mailto:suzette.rabalais@la.gov) with any questions.

### **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](mailto:sca@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](mailto:suzette.rabalais@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 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](mailto:stephanie.marcum@la.gov) with questions.



# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors



## 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](mailto:charmaine.cureton@la.gov) with questions.

## Ask CoCo

### Q & A With COUNSELOR CONNECT!

**Q:** I am aware the FAFSA doesn't open until December. What would you recommend counselors do with early graduates (December) needing to complete FAFSA forms for graduation eligibility if the new forms are not opened at that time?

- The "Best Practices" Counselor

**A:** I would recommend early graduates complete the [TOPS application](#) to satisfy their graduation requirement. If the student plans to attend college and apply for federal aid, they can complete the FAFSA application when it opens.



# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors

## Scholarships/Funding Opportunities



<a href="http://Scholarship.CollegeCovered.com">Scholarship.CollegeCovered.com</a>	<a href="#">Big Future College Board</a>	<a href="#">Access Scholarships</a>	<a href="http://Scholarships.com">Scholarships.com</a>
<a href="#">College Raptor Scholarship Search</a>	<a href="#">Find Scholarships Based Off ACT Score</a>	<a href="#">\$2,000 Sallie Mae Scholarship Sweepstakes</a>	<a href="#">ITI Technical College</a>
<a href="#">Go Army</a>	<a href="#">BrokeScholar</a>	<a href="#">EducationMoney</a>	<a href="#">Access Scholarships</a>
<a href="#">Great College Deals</a>	<a href="#">ScholarshipOwl</a>	<a href="#">Discover Scholarship Search</a>	<a href="#">Educationopolis</a>
<a href="http://CollegeScholarships.org">CollegeScholarships.org</a>	<a href="#">DEWALT Trades Scholarship</a>	<a href="#">PepsiCo Foundation Uplift Scholarship Program</a>	<a href="http://Bold.org">Bold.org Scholarships</a>

[Lela's \\$1000 FAFSA Completion Scholarship](#) application for the Class of 2024 is now available for those who plan to apply for college financial aid by submitting a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

[Scholly by Sallie](#): Free online tool to help get matched with scholarships.



# COUNSELOR CONNECT

A Publication for Louisiana's  
Professional School Counselors

[Home Depot Foundations's Path to Pro Scholarship for Women](#): \$4,000 scholarship for females to help fill the skilled labor gap and diversify the trades industry. The focus areas are carpentry, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and construction management.

[Home Depot Foundations's Path to Pro Scholarship by SkillPointe Foundation](#): \$2,000 scholarship for students who plan to be the next generation of skilled trade leaders. The focus areas are carpentry, electrical, HVAC, plumbing, and construction management.

[How To Pay For College](#): ACT offers resources on financial aid, finding scholarships, and answers to frequently asked questions regarding funding for college. Resources include articles, videos, and webinars to help prepare paying for college.

## Contact Our Office

### Office of Career and College Readiness Contact Information

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

Do you or a colleague need to sign up for the [Counselor Connect](#) newsletter? Please subscribe via the following [link](#).