LOUISIANA OFFICE OF STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

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CITIZENSHIP

Q-1. I am not a U.S. citizen. Am I eligible for TOPS?

A. At the time you graduate from high school, you must either be a U.S. citizen or a permanent resident as defined by the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services to receive TOPS. See Question 2 for additional information.

Q-2. What documentation can I provide to LOSFA to verify my permanent residency status or citizenship?

A. If you are a permanent resident, you may provide a copy of one of the following:

1. Permanent Resident Card - Form I-551, or
2. Application for Naturalization and/or Certificate of Naturalization, or
3. A foreign passport page indicating initial admission as a permanent resident, or
4. A re-entry permit indicating permanent residency.

If you are a citizen, you must provide a copy of one of the following:

1. A U. S. birth certificate;
2. A Certificate of Citizenship; or
3. A Certificate of Naturalization; or
4. A U.S. passport; or
5. A Consular Report of Birth Abroad of a Citizen of the United States of America.

If you believe that you are a permanent resident or a citizen and you do not have one of the listed documents, you should send an email to LOSFA at custserv@la.gov.

An "Employment Authorization Document" issued by the USCIS <u>CANNOT</u> be used to establish citizenship.

Q-3. Are there any exceptions or circumstances that would allow a waiver of the citizenship or permanent resident status requirement?

A. No. However, the Commission recognizes that the process for applying for permanent resident status is often delayed and can be very time consuming. For these reasons, it has authorized LOSFA to consider the circumstances of a student who applied for permanent residency before graduating from high school.

If you applied for permanent resident status before high school graduation, you should contact LOSFA by email at custserv@la.gov. Your TOPS award will not be paid until you have been granted permanent residency status and LOSFA determines that you have met the initial and continuing eligibility requirements.

Q-4. Will a student who has an H-4 visa be eligible for a TOPS award?

A. No. This is a visa for a spouse or child of a nonimmigrant temporary worker who has an H-1, H-2 or H3 visa. This student is not a permanent resident.

Q-5. Will a student with an F-1 visa be eligible for a TOPS award?

A. No. This is a visa for a student who seeks to study in the United States. To qualify for this visa, a student must maintain a permanent residence abroad which the student has no intention of giving up.