



OCTOBER 2018

BOTTOM LINE CHICAGO

ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT

Overview

ABOUT

Bottom Line is a national education organization that is addressing the degree divide by providing academic, personal and financial counselling to empower low-income, first-generation students to attend and succeed in college. The organization is committed to building strong connections with students by providing them with individualized support. Students receive an advisor starting in the summer before 12th grade and are supported through college for up to six years to ensure they have the guidance they need to attend college and persist through college graduation.

WHY WE INVESTED

Bottom Line Chicago is equipping first generation, low-income students to succeed in college. National data shows that 80 percent of Bottom Line students who enroll in a four-year college earn a bachelor's degree within six years, which compares to an attainment rate of 46 percent for similar students. Bottom Line expects its students to earn a bachelor's degree, accumulate no more than \$36,000 in debt, and be employed or continuing their education six months after graduation. Bottom Line's national management team and Chicago founding executive director are highly capable leaders who have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to program quality and evaluation. Bottom Line has grown from supporting 25 high school seniors in 1997 to currently serving nearly 7,700 students in Boston, Worcester, New York City and most recently Chicago. This growth is enabled by Bottom Line's cost-efficient model and partnerships.



GRANTEE SINCE

2014

INVESTMENT TO DATE

\$911K

CURRENT NUMBER SERVED

1,036

LEADERSHIP

Chris Broughton
Executive Director

Our Assessment



PROGRAM

The supports that high schools and colleges currently offer first-generation college students from low-income communities to succeed in college are insufficient: nationally only 46 percent of low-income students entering college with academic track records similar to Bottom Line participants attain a degree within six years. In contrast, approximately 80 percent of the Bottom Line students nationally who enroll in a four-year college earn a bachelor's degree within six years. Additionally, Bottom Line launched a seven-year randomized controlled trial in 2014 and early results demonstrate significant impacts on Bottom Line students' college enrollment and persistence. Bottom Line achieves these results through its personalized support prior to and during college. Of the students Bottom Line Chicago (BLC) serves, approximately 20 percent are enrolled in its Access program, which supports high school students by enrolling them in a best-match college, and 80 percent are enrolled in its Success program, which supports college students in persisting and completing college. Most recent data suggest that 85 percent of college enrollees in BLC's Access and Success programs persist to their second year of college, as compared to 74 percent of comparable CPS college enrollees.



LEADERSHIP

Bottom Line Chicago (BLC) is led by a highly capable leader, Chris Broughton, who has grown into his executive director role and set a solid foundation for long-term success. Broughton has proven his skills in building a board, cultivating donors and leading his regional team. In recent years, Broughton expanded his management team to include a director of programs and a director of development, and continues to develop the cohesiveness and leadership of his management team to support a growing regional team. Broughton and his management team are supported by a regional board of twelve members who have been involved in strategic planning and fundraising efforts. BLC continues to build a board that brings diverse backgrounds and perspectives. The board is currently engaged via a committee structure, which has facilitated a transition to an effective regional advisory board consistent with BLC's organizational trajectory. Bottom Line welcomed a new national CEO, Steven Colon, in September 2018. Colon brings expertise in the college access space, as well as national strategic leadership from his time at Teach For America and The College Board. We are encouraged by both the diligence of the search and the promising selection of Colon.

Our Assessment



OPERATIONS

Bottom Line has a strong financial track record that supports the organization's growth. Nationally, Bottom Line has grown its total revenue from \$2.8M in FY2012 to over \$13M in FY2018. Since launching in FY2015, Bottom Line Chicago (BLC) has followed a similar trajectory and has built its revenue from \$480K in FY2015 to over \$2M in FY2018. BLC has continued to build its development capacity with strategies including building its regional board, transitioning its annual event to a dinner event and also building its presence in Chicago via local media. These strategies will enable the organization to meet its ambitious target of over \$3M raised in FY2021 to support its continued growth to serve more students in Chicago. Additionally, BLC will add another member to its development team to support the growth of its annual fundraising. This team member, along with program additions, brings BLC's total headcount to 26 full-time employees. Broughton and his management team will continue to focus on building team culture, including diversity and inclusion practices, to retain their highly capable team as they grow.



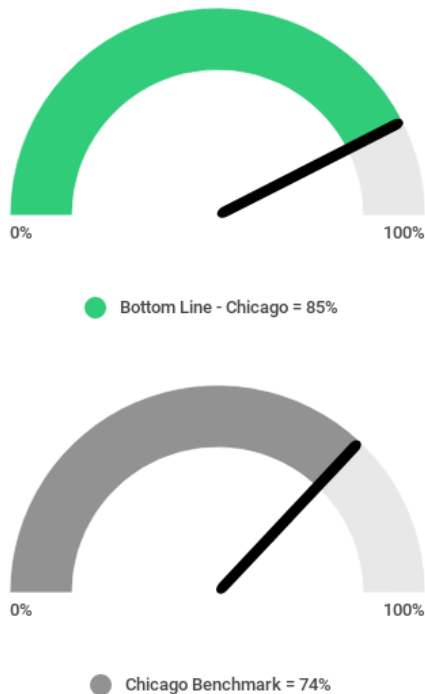
SCALE

Bottom Line Chicago's (BLC) growth remains compelling since entering the Chicago landscape. The Chicago site launched in FY2015 with 150 students, is on track to serve nearly 1,400 students in FY2019 and aims to support more than 2,000 students in FY2021. BLC is cost efficient relative to many organizations in the college access and persistence space, which contributes to the model's scalability. Given that BLC's growth strategy is focused on significantly scaling the Success Direct program, it will be critical that the organization continue to build its referral networks with additional high schools and community partners. BLC has quickly gained traction in the city—meeting its student recruitment goals with more student applications than admitted into its programs—and is on track to nearly double its current students served to reach thousands of additional students in the coming years.

Grantee Performance

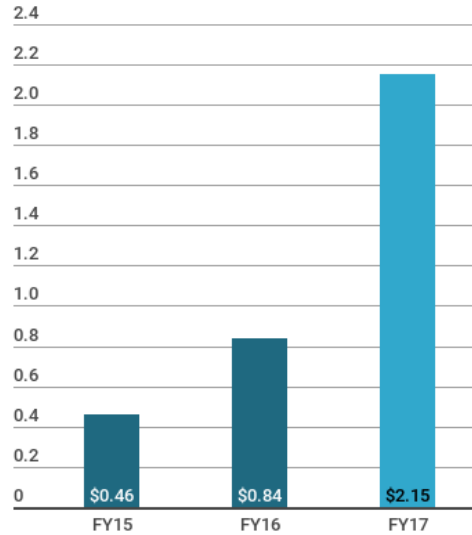
KEY OUTCOME

College persistence of enrollees



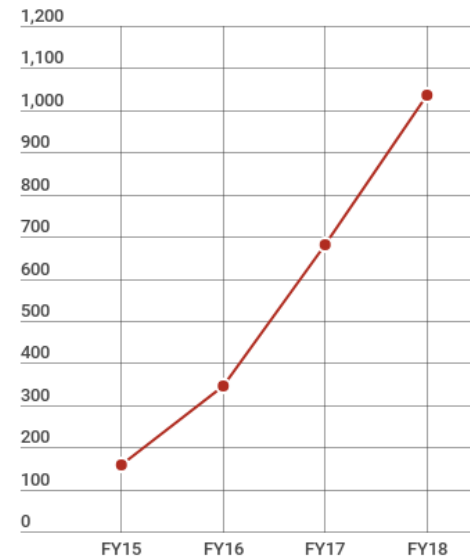
REVENUE

In millions



SCALE

Students served

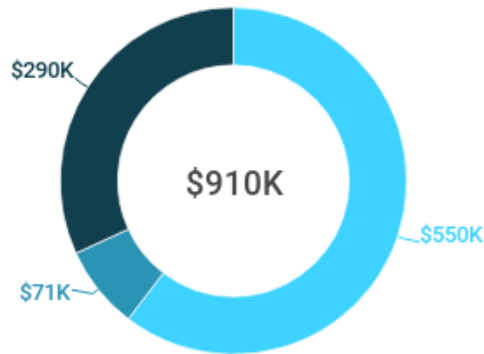


Note: Key outcome and benchmark calculated using an indexed rate (each calculation input based on the most recently available data) rather than a cohort rate (calculation based on data from the same set of students over time) in order to reflect the current state of educational attainment as accurately as possible. Benchmark is based on Chicago data reflecting outcomes for students with academic credentials similar to BLC students.

Sources: Bottom Line Chicago; Bottom Line Chicago financial statements; Chicago Public Schools

Our Impact

INVESTMENT TO DATE



● Monetary grants ● Management support ● Leveraged funding

MANAGEMENT SUPPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Public Relations: Bottom Line Chicago (BLC) hired a consultant to support public relations efforts by writing stories, pitching to media outlets for strategic media placement and consulting on BLC's local narrative and story ideas. A Better Chicago helped scope the project, introduced Bottom Line Chicago to vetted consultants and covered 50 percent of the fees.

Market Research: Bottom Line Chicago (BLC) hired a consultant to conduct market research on college access and persistence programming in Chicago. A Better Chicago helped scope the project, introduced BLC to vetted consultants, and covered 75 percent of the fees.

Leadership Development: Bottom Line Chicago's leadership team is participating in Leading for Impact®, a cohort-driven leadership development program run by The Bridgespan Group. A Better Chicago is covering 50 percent of the fees.

Contact Us

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