HOUSTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

Nonprofit for first-gen college kids launching in Houston amid expansion surge

By Janet Miranda, Reporter, Houston Business Journal
Dec 18, 2025

Bottom Line connects with local partners at the Good Reason Houston ConnectED Luncheon held Oct. 29. From left: Bottom Line CEO Steve Colón; Dr. Chantelle George, GC Consulting founder and CEO, formerly with OneGoal, College Possible, University of Houston; and Farhad Asghar, chief growth officer of Bottom Line

Courtesy Bottom Line

Story Highlights

- Bottom Line will serve 180 Houston students starting in spring 2026.
- The nonprofit is in the process of hiring a local executive director and other employees.
- Bottom Line also is “in the early phases” of embarking on a search for its local office.

A nationwide nonprofit to support first-generation college students will begin operating in the Houston area next year.

Bottom Line, an organization dedicated to help degree-aspiring high school seniors navigate college admissions process, will begin serving 180 Houston-area high school students through its Access program in spring 2026. The nonprofit also has offices in Boston, where it was founded in 1997; Chicago; New York City; Dayton, Ohio; and Detroit.

The nonprofit currently serves more than 7,000 first-generation and low-income students through its programs called Access, Success and Blueprint. Bottom Line uses a one-on-one advising model, helping students through the admissions process, picking schools and navigating financial aid. It also provides advising after they get to college and even six months after they graduate.

Brian Alexander, Bottom Line’s vice president of regional growth, told the Houston Business Journal that the move to Houston made sense because the area is home to many higher education institutions and one of the youngest populations in the U.S. Indeed, more than 1 in 4 residents in the Houston metro area is younger than 18, according to the Greater Houston Partnership.

“We were really impressed around some of the bold commitments and plans from leaders,” Alexander said, referencing a pledge by education nonprofit Good Reason Houston to double the rate of public-school students earning a living wage by 2040.

The nonprofit spent 18 months exploring an expansion and talking to various community leaders and local nonprofits, Alexander noted. Houston will be Bottom Line’s sixth location, the latest in the nonprofit's surge of expansions in recent years.

“In 2023, we started a period of historic growth with the opening of our fourth location in Southwest Ohio, and next we opened in Detroit,” Alexander said.

By 2030, the nonprofit hopes to be in seven to 10 cities, and conversations to bring Bottom Line into Indianapolis and Los Angeles are already in progress.

In the past, the nonprofit had expanded at a slower pace, first in Boston and then in New York.

Bottom Line Houston is supported by a $1.4 million, three-year commitment from the Michael & Susan Dell Foundation and investments from The Jerry C. Dearing Family Foundation.

The organization is in the process of hiring an executive director, three program director-level positions and three college access advisors, Alexander said. The nonprofit hopes to make local hires.

Meanwhile, the organization is “in the early phases” of embarking on a search for its local office, Alexander said, adding more details will come in 2026.

Bottom Line’s program boasts a “proven track record” of increasing college, graduation and living wage attainment. Students who go through the program are 23% more likely than their peers to graduate in four years. Additionally, nearly 1,000 Bottom Line students earned bachelor’s degrees in 2023, graduating with an average of $19,000 of student debt. That’s less than the average of $29,550 for typical students, according to the Education Data Initiative.

Read the article here.