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JAMAICA PLAIN

JP nonprofit a finalist for \$1m 'College Success' award

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 28, 2011 04:15 PM

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(Globe file photo / Suzanne Kreiter)

Photo from 2008. Sarah Hedges (right), a counselor at The Bottom Line, a nonprofit, helped Francisca Mendes with her college search.

By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

A Jamaica Plain non-profit that councils low-income students from their senior year in high school through college is one of five organizations from across the country selected as a finalist for a grant worth up to \$1 million.

Founded in 1997 in a small, ground-floor office in New Mission High School before moving to its current headquarters on Amory Street in JP three years late, [Bottom Line](#) has grown from serving 25 to now nearly 1,600 students through its Boston office and another in Worcester that opened in 2008.

The organization, which has plans to expand to New York City this summer, was selected as a finalist this week for the USA Funds Trustees' National Award for College Success. The winner of the grant will be announced in March.

"It's tremendous," Executive Director Greg Johnson said Friday of the finalist selection for Bottom Line, which currently has an average annual budget of \$2 million.

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He added that should Bottom Line win, the grant “would really help us to expand more rapidly.”

Bottom Line provides individual counseling for students beginning during their senior year of high school, as they enter college and throughout up to six years of higher education on issues from applying for college admission and financial aid to academic and career advising. Bottom Line says by receiving one-on-one counseling its students are 43 percent more likely to graduate college than their peers who do not, and 73 percent of the organization’s college students have graduated within six years.

Two of the other grant finalist organizations are based in New York and the other two are based in California and Oregon.

USA Funds, a nonprofit that aims to help American families benefit from higher education announced the college success grants last summer to commemorate its 50th anniversary, “and to support the national goal of increasing the percentage of American adults with college degrees and re-establishing the United States as the nation with the highest proportion of college graduates in the world,” said a release from the organization.

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