

AllieKits Network, Inc. Receives Catalyst Grant to Launch ASCEND Creative Workforce Initiative in Long Beach

LONG BEACH, CA, UNITED STATES, August 25, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [AllieKits Network, Inc.](#), a nonprofit organization committed to expanding creative and entrepreneurial access for girls and young women, has been awarded a Catalyst Phase grant from the [California Community Foundation \(CCF\)](#). This grant is part of the California Jobs First initiative, funded by the State of California's Employment Development Department (EDD), and will support the planning and design of the organization's ASCEND Creative Workforce Initiative.

ASCEND - short for Advancing Students in Creative Enterprise and Nex-Gen Design, is being developed to create equitable pathways into creative careers for young women ages 16–24. Centered on video production as the anchor skill, the program also integrates community-centered media and digital storytelling. ASCEND will move beyond traditional training by offering hands-on experiences that bridge education, economic mobility, and creative industry access.

The Catalyst grant will support curriculum design, youth focus groups, employer engagement, and the planning for a dedicated creative training hub in Long Beach. By centering youth voices and addressing barriers to access, the initiative is being structured for long-term impact, ensuring participants gain creative skills, work on real projects, and access paid pathways within the creative economy.

"Our community has incredible creative talent - but too often, the doors to real opportunities are closed to young women from disinvested communities," says [Allison "Allie Knows" Tillman](#),



AllieKits Network Catalyst Grant Committee. From left to right: Program Manager Edwina Rambo, Founder & CEO Allison "Allie Knows" Tillman, and Finance Lead Mary Sum.

Founder and CEO of AllieKits Network, Inc. “This Catalyst grant allows us to take our time and do it right - by listening to young people, designing a hands-on program that reflects their realities, and building something that’s actually built to last.”

As part of its long-term vision, AllieKits Network is also planning a social enterprise creative agency that will connect ASCEND graduates with real clients and employers. This future agency will give young women more than just certifications; it will provide project-based experience and a portfolio that showcases their skills. By embedding equity, mentorship, and entrepreneurship at its core, the agency model aims to shift the landscape for creative workforce development in Long Beach.



AllieKits Network Catalyst Grant Committee. From left to right: Program Manager Edwina Rambo, Founder & CEO Allison “Allie Knows” Tillman, and Finance Lead Mary Sum.

AllieKits Network, Inc. was founded to address the persistent lack of access to creative and entrepreneurial pathways for young women, particularly those from communities historically overlooked by the industry. With this Catalyst funding, the organization is taking a meaningful step toward building the foundation for creative career access that can change lives and strengthen the region’s growing creative economy.

For more information, please email ascend@alliekitsnetwork.org.

About AllieKits Network, Inc.

AllieKits Network, Inc. is a Long Beach-based nonprofit helping girls and young women turn creativity into careers. Through mentorship, leadership development, and hands-on learning, the organization prepares participants to become creators, change agents, and future business leaders. Founded in 2019 by Allison “Allie Knows” Tillman, a creative strategist and nonprofit leader, AllieKits has built its programs on a community-first model that emphasizes equity and opportunity. In 2025, the organization was awarded Catalyst Phase funding to launch the predevelopment stage of ASCEND, a creative workforce program designed to prepare young women for careers in video production, community-centered media, and digital storytelling.

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