

PRESS RELEASE

MEDIA CONTACT: Public Information Office

PIO@bos.lacounty.gov

For Immediate Release:

August 21, 2025

L.A. County Office of Child Protection Launches Youth-Led Media Projects

LOS ANGELES — The Los Angeles County Commission for Women (LACCW) has announced the recipients of its annual Resilience Scholarship program, which honors women and girls who have demonstrated exceptional perseverance.

On Friday, August 15, the Commission recognized 15 women and girls in a special ceremony held at the Kenneth Hahn Hall of Administration in Los Angeles. The award emphasizes proven determination, adaptability, and the ability to rise above difficult challenges to achieve academic success.

“Our Resilience Scholarship winners’ life stories, unique perspectives, and varied areas of study are a testament to the widespread impact they will have across Los Angeles County,” said Supervisor Kathryn Barger, Chair of the Board of Supervisors. “I’m proud that our Commission for Women has continued the worthwhile tradition of this scholarship program, which celebrates the determination and drive of young women in our communities and extends support to help them continue to pursue their dreams.”

“Today’s scholarship recipients have demonstrated an extraordinary commitment to their education, personal growth, and communities” said Hilda L. Solis, Los Angeles County Chair Pro Tem and First District Supervisor. “As we navigate unprecedented times, it is inspirational to see the perseverance and determination each of these young women have demonstrated in the face of adversity. Our honorees serve as a reminder of true resilience, and drive us all to work towards a better, more equitable future, where every woman and girl in Los Angeles County can chart her journey.”

“The Resilience Scholarship helps close the opportunity gap that far too many of our young people face. I want to congratulate all of this year’s awardees—each one has demonstrated unwavering dedication, and I’m proud that the County is investing in their limitless futures,” said Supervisor Holly J. Mitchell. “Thank you to the Los Angeles County Commission for Women for its commitment to providing critical financial support and mentorship for the next generation. Together, we will continue the work necessary to ensure all young people have an equitable opportunity to achieve their dreams.”

“In reading the applications of our Fourth District recipients, I was struck by the way each of these young women used their hardest moments to inspire the career paths they plan to pursue: social work, sociology, and public health,” said Supervisor Janice Hahn. “These are fields of study that focus on understanding the problems our society faces and how to help solve them. And they are all fields of work that are in need of more smart, ambitious, resilient people.”

The 2025 Resilience Scholarship recipients are:

First District:

- Chastity Janine Collado, James A. Garfield High School
- Zixin “Rachel” Li, Gabrielino High School
- Inez Monze Meraz-Lerma, Whittier College

Second District:

- Kalmykova Yana, El Camino College
- Nijah S. Mendez, Baldwin Wallace University
- Caitlyn Omena Oppong, Howard University

Third District:

- Jamie Bender, Pasadena City College
- Mazel Faith Ceniza, John F. Kennedy High School
- Samantha James, University of California Los Angeles (UCLA)

Fourth District:

- Kelli Shehani Haupage, California State University, Long Beach
- Isabel Lisette Gonzalez, California State University, Dominguez Hills
- Adriana Orellana-Barrientos, University of California, Irvine

Fifth District:

- Karen Dianne D. Campos, California State University, Northridge
- Astrid Arly Hernandez, Loyola Law School
- Ava Carey LaLonde, Occidental College

“It is the mission of the Los Angeles County Commission for Women to ensure that women and girls are safe, supported, and that they thrive,” said Dr. Regina Smith, LACCW President. “We recognize that these are challenging times, yet women and girls of LA County will rise to the occasion. Join us as we celebrate their resilience and honor them with this year’s Resilience Scholarship. Congratulations – and remember it’s your story, it’s your journey, and HerStory.”

The Resilience Scholarship aims to empower women and girls in their educational pursuits through providing financial support as well as a motivational resource. The scholarship funds can contribute to incidentals above and beyond expenses covered by federal and state financial aid.

The Resilience Scholarship program was established in 1999 by the Commission for Women to empower women and girls throughout Los Angeles County as a Run/Walk event. In 2011, Commission was met with financial challenges but maintained the Scholarship through its own Women of the Year event and fundraiser. Today, over 400 recipients from each of the County's five supervisorial districts have been awarded since the scholarship's inception.

To learn more about the Resilience Scholarship Program or the Los Angeles County Commission for Women, visit: laccw.lacounty.gov/.

About the Los Angeles County Commission for Women:

A citizen's advisory body, the Commission for Women is dedicated to promoting and protecting the rights and interests of women and girls in Los Angeles County. The Commission works to empower women and girls through education, advocacy, and community engagement.

- end -