

On Sept 9, 2023, the Massachusetts Asian American Pacific Islander Commission hosted a Western Mass listening session in Springfield Massachusetts. Approximately 8 different community organizations updated the commission about various programs and events they hosted since the last listening session hosted on May 13, 2023. If you have any questions about the AAPI Commission and Western Massachusetts, feel free to contact Hannah Ku, Regional Coordinator, at regional.coordinator@aapicommission.org.

Description: These notes highlight the most important takeaways from the Massachusetts AAPI Commission's Western Mass Listening Session held on September 9, 2023, in Springfield MA. These notes are broken into two sections: main takeaways and updates from organizations

Contact: If you have any questions about these notes, the AAPI Commission more broadly, or would like to work with us, please contact Hannah Ku, the Regional Coordinator Intern, at regional.coordinator@aapicommission.org

Main Takeaways:

1. Developing more concrete steps to establishing the Western Mass advisory council
2. Community members want to find a more efficient way to be regularly updated and receive reports from each group's activities and events through the Commission and to a more casual social media platform, such as Facebook, Band, or Teams
3. Community members would like to meet with Governor Healey's representatives
4. For the November meeting, it was suggested for each organization to list their achievements from the past year and to plan for the upcoming year

Updates from Organizations:

- Bayanihan Association
 - Philippine Independence Day in New York for the 125th anniversary
 - Hosted a Summer picnic in East Longmeadow
 - On October 21st, there will be a Fashion Show Benefit for children in need of surgery
- ACUA
 - National founder passed away
 - Autumn Festival planning
 - Mental Health Webinars
 - Organization would like to partner with UMass for immigrant students
 - Taiwanese Musicians performing at Symphony Hall where they got to meet with the musicians
 - Chinese New Year Celebration to be hosted on February 10th at the Basketball Hall of Fame
 - Details TBA
 - Webinar detailing information on financial aid for low-income students
- Western New England Law Student Association

- Went to D.C. to lobby for laws that would benefit AAPI communities and to fight for access to council for people in immigration proceedings
- Wanting improvements to quota system for health care students
- Many Massachusetts representatives support the laws, whereas other states are much more hostile
- Monique would like to connect with UMass AAPI students and introduce them to careers in law
- SVCA
 - Housing and immigration support
 - Grant applications to help communities and office
 - Moon Festival will be held on September 24th from 5-10pm
 - Vietnamese New Year held on February 24th
 - Fundraiser event to support the NY celebration
- CAWM
 - Moon Festival in Libraries, 2:30-4:30pm
 - 9/16 Amherst Jones Library
 - 9/23 Northampton Forbes Library
 - 9/30 TBA (Agawam or alternate)
 - October 14th Dragon Boat Festival
 - North River Park
 - Sunrise Park Volunteer gathering 10/21, Suffield, CT thanking volunteers for organization
- Bhutanese Society of Western Mass
 - Creating film about the immigration experience
 - Organization using UMass as a fiscal agent