

Special Commission on State Institutions

Commonly Used Terms, Acronyms or Abbreviations

Term, Acronym or Abbreviation	Description
Abstain	To choose not to vote either for or against something. It's like saying "I'm not going to pick either side."
Almshouse	A house built originally by a charitable organization for poor people to live in.
Asylum	Institution or hospital specializing in the treatment of persons with mental illness
CDDER	Center for Developmental Disabilities Evaluation and Research
CART	Communication Access Realtime Translation
Commissioned	To be assigned a task by the government
Commissioner	A person who is in charge of a formal organization or group, or a member of a commission
Comparative standards	A set of rules or goals used to compare different things. This helps you see how they are alike or different. It's like comparing different brands of the same product using the same rules to see which one is better.
Consolidate	To join together into one whole
Court Ordered	Something that a judge or court has decided must happen. It's like when the boss (the judge) gives an order that everyone has to follow.
Custodial Care	A person is confined and is being watched over and supervised
Descendant	A person who comes from a particular family.
DDS	Department of Developmental Services
Deliberation	During a meeting, deliberation means the official discussions where people share information and ideas.
Delinquents	A person who gets in trouble, often with the law
DMH	Department of Mental Health
DLC	Disability Law Center
DCAMM	Division of Capitol Asset Management and Maintenance
DOC	Department of Corrections
Embezzlement	Embezzlement is when someone takes money or property that they were trusted with and uses it for themselves in a dishonest way.
Epileptic	A person who has epilepsy which is a type of seizure disorder.
EOHHS	Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Estate	A person's estate is the total value of everything they own, after subtracting any debts. This includes things like houses, cars, money, investments, and other property
Eugenics	The idea that you can engineer a better human population by breeding for certain genes.
Feeble-minded	A term that is no longer used to describe a person with an intellectual or developmental disability. In the 18 th century feeble-minded was a term used to describe a person had a feeble, or weak, mind.
Gap Analysis	A process to figure out the difference or “gap” between “the best” and where you want it to be. A gap analysis helps to identify what’s missing or needs improvement

Guardian	A guardian is a person who takes care of and is responsible for someone who can't take care of themselves. This could be because the person is sick, disabled, or a child whose parents have passed away.
HIPAA	Stands for the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act. It is a law in the United States that helps to protect the privacy and security of individual's medical information
HIPAA violation	A HIPAA violation is when someone doesn't follow the rules of the HIPAA law, which is about keeping your medical information private. It's like breaking the rules for keeping secrets about your health.
Incarceration	To be imprisoned or in jail
Inebriates	A person who is alcoholic; suffers from alcoholism
Indigent	A person who is extremely poor, lacking the basic resources of a normal life
Industrial Revolution	Time in US history where people began working in factories instead on in farming
Jurisdiction	To have legal rights over something.
Key Informant Interviews	Key informant interviews are special interviews with people who know a lot about topics related to state institutions such as records, burials or memorials. These interviews try to gather information from different folks who have knowledge about the topics important to the Special Commission.
Legislator	A legislator is someone who is elected to make laws. They are like the rule-makers who decide what laws should be passed.
Legislative Activity	Legislative activity refers to the work done by lawmakers, such as members of the Massachusetts State legislature, to create, change, or remove laws. This includes activities like proposing bills, discussing them, and voting on them to determine whether they become law.
Letter of Inquiry	A letter of inquiry asks someone for specific information.
Lunaticks	An old way of spelling "lunatic" which is an outdated/offensive term for someone affected with a severely disordered state of mind
Make a Motion	To make a motion means suggesting an idea or proposal during a meeting. It's like saying, "I have an idea we should talk about!"
MGL	Massachusetts General Law
MOU	A memorandum of understanding (MOU) is a type of agreement between two or more groups. It helps each group understand what they are planning to do together. Even though an MOU is not a law, it shows what each group expects from the other.
Next of Kin	Refers to a person's closest living relatives, such as their spouse, children, or parents. They are the people who are considered most important in legal matters or emergencies involving the person.
OML	Open Meeting Law
Paying a probate bond	Paying a probate bond means buying a bond, or type of insurance, which is ordered by the court to make sure that the person in charge of an estate will take care of a deceased person's estate fairly and in their best interest. It ensures they will manage the deceased person's assets properly and follow the will and laws. The bond protects the people who are supposed to receive money or property from the estate. If the person in charge makes a mistake with the funds, the beneficiaries can use the bond to get back any lost money.
Personal Information	Refers to details about you, like your name, address, or birthday. It can also mean other private information about you, like a medical diagnosis. It's the information that tells others who you are.

Potter's Field	A potter's field, paupers' grave or common grave is a place for the burial of unknown, unclaimed or poor people.
Presumption	A presumption is something that is accepted as true but is not certain to be true. "The presumption is that the meeting will start on time, unless otherwise stated."
Probate Court	Probate court is a special court that deals with the process of carrying out a person's will and sharing their belongings after they pass away.
Quorum	A quorum means more than half of the members have to be present for official decisions.
Recent Developments	Something new that just happened. It could be a new event, discovery, or change that we found out about recently.
Receptacles	It means a place where paupers were sent to live in the 1800s. Examples of a receptacle could be a hospital, a jail, an almshouse or some type of institution.
Record Access	Refers to being able to get to or see certain information or documents. It's like having the key to open a door to a room where important files are kept.
Record Privacy	Means keeping information about you safe and secret. It's like making sure your secrets are locked away so nobody can see them without permission.
Record Security	Means keeping important information safe and protected. It's like keeping a lock on a box to make sure no one can get inside without permission.
Redact	It means to remove or hide sensitive information from a document, like a text or report, before it's made public, usually by blacking out or covering parts of it to protect privacy or confidentiality; essentially, it means to "edit out" certain details to keep them hidden.
Second a Motion	This means agreeing with someone else's idea or proposal during a meeting. It's like saying, "I agree with that idea and think we should discuss it further!"
Segregated	To be kept separate from other people
State Archives	State archives are like a library for state government and agencies. The State Archives keep old papers that talk about past rules, ways of doing things, and choices.
State Pauper	Old-fashioned word for someone who is poor that is supported by the state
SCSI	Special Commission on State Institutions
Violation	The act of doing something against the rules.