

**Special Commission on State Institutions  
Scope of Work**

***DRAFT DOCUMENT***

Our commission has 17 members. We are called The Special Commission on State Institutions. Many of us are disabled. Our job is to find out some very important things about what happened many years ago at the Fernald School, the Met State Hospital, and places like them. These places were run by the Massachusetts government. We have to share what we find out in a year and a half.

We have a lot of work to do, so we need help. We want to hire someone who can do the things that are on the list on this page and the next page. We can pay \$145,000 for someone to help us this year. We can ask for more money from Massachusetts next June if we do good work.

We want help from people who know that the work we are doing is very important. Nobody has ever done the work we need to do, so this is very important. Most of all, we need help from people who respect us as disabled people and do things with us, not just for us.

**These are the things we want help doing:**

1. There are lots of old papers from institutions like the Fernald School and Met State. They are very important because they can tell us what happened.

We want someone to do these things:

- a. We want to find all the places where lots of old papers are. We want to know what kinds of papers they are. These papers tell us about the way the institutions were run. They also tell us about the people who lived and worked at institutions. They can also tell us where people who died at the institutions are buried.
  - b. We think some of these papers are owned by groups that are not the state. We want to know who those groups are and how they got the papers. We want to know what papers the state still has. We also want to know if the people who own the papers are taking care of them well or badly.
  - c. Sometimes people got rid of papers. We want to know which ones are gone and why they got rid of them. We also want to know if the people who threw them away asked if it was okay before they threw them away. We want to know if they followed the rules and laws when they got rid of them.
2. Sometimes people want to see papers from the Fernald School, Met State, and other institutions. Some people lived at these institutions. Other people had family members who lived there. Some people worked at the institutions or study the history of them. We want to know how hard it is for people to get papers.
    - a. We want you to find out what happens when a person asks for these papers.

- b. We want to know how many people have asked for those papers, how many got them, and how many did not. We want to know what types of people they are.
- c. We also want to know their stories so we can learn more about how they feel. Did they get the papers? Was it hard?
- d. We want to know how hard it is for disabled people to be able to get these papers.
- e. We want to know what is done in other places when people ask for papers.

3. A lot of people died at places like the Fernald School, the Met State, and other institutions. We want to know where they were buried.

- a. We want you to find all the lists of people buried at institutions, and in other places.
- b. Give us a list of all the places where people are buried.
- c. Tell us about the cemeteries that are at the institutions. When did the cemeteries open? When did they close? Are they being taken care of? Who owns them now? Do the owners have a plan to take care of the cemetery?
- d. Tell us how people were buried when they died. What were the rules? Were their families told? Did they get a gravestone with their name? Was there a funeral?
- e. Find out if anybody was buried in a place they were not supposed to be buried.

4. Help us run our commission by doing these things:

- a. Help us plan our meetings.
- b. Help us schedule our meetings.
- c. Write down what happens at our meetings.
- d. Tell us how the work is going every three months, and ask us questions about what we want them to do.
- e. Put all their answers together by September 30, 2024 so we can ask you questions.
- f. Answer our questions and give us a finished set of answers by January 15, 2025.
- g. Work with us and respect the way we need to work without telling us that we cannot work that way. Follow the law on making sure we have the right to do our work the way we need to.
- h. Help us be independent from the state so that people know we did this work without being told what to do.