

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
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
EOHHS	Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Eugenics	The idea that you can engineer a better human population by breeding for certain genes.
Feebleminded	A term that is no longer used to describe a person with an intellectual or developmental disability. In the 18 th century feebleminded 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
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
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.
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
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.
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.
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.
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.