

State Clemency Resources

Which form(s) of clemency does the state offer?

- Pardons
- Commutations

Decisionmaker

The Massachusetts Parole Board reviews applications for pardons and commutations and sends recommendations to the governor for each applicant. The governor makes the final decision.

Resources:

mass.gov/service-details/pardons-and-commutations

Constitutional and statutory authority

- **Constitutional Authority:**
Mass. Const. Pt. 2, C. 2 § 1 Art. VIII
- **Statutory Authority:**
Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 127 § 152
Mass. Gen. Laws ch. 127 § 154

Note: According to the Mass. Legislature, general laws are permanent in nature and of general application

Eligibility Criteria

- **Pardon criteria:** To be granted a pardon, a petitioner must have demonstrated 'good citizenship,' as well as a specific, verified, and compelling need for a pardon, as well as a specific, verified, and compelling need for a pardon. In making its decision, the Parole Board views evidence, including support for the petitioner in the institution and community, their accomplishments and achievements, and the nature and extent of any opposition to the petition.
- **Commutation criteria:** Neither the law nor the Massachusetts Parole Board explain the eligibility criteria for a commutation. The Parole Board's website simply states it will determine if a hearing is warranted, after which it will conduct a commutation hearing and makes a recommendation to the Governor based on its findings.

Application Process

- **Pardon Process:** You must first fill out a pardon petition form and send it to the appropriate address, which is indicated on the form. [Once an application for a pardon has been submitted], the Parole Board reviews the [applicant's] case to assess whether or not it warrants a hearing. If the Board determines that a hearing should be held, they will conduct a hearing and the full Board will then make a recommendation to the Governor.
- **Commutation Process:** You must first fill out a pardon petition form and send it to the appropriate address, which is indicated on the form. [T]he Parole Board [will then] determine if a hearing is warranted. The entire Parole Board then conducts a commutation hearing, which is open to the public, and makes a recommendation to the Governor based on its findings.

APPLICATION LINKS

- mass.gov/service-details/pardons-and-commutations
- **Pardon Petition Form:** mass.gov/doc/pardon-petition-form/download
- **Commutation Petition Form:** mass.gov/doc/commutation-petition-form/download