



Telecom Order CRTC 2025-197

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Determination of interim costs award with respect to the participation of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in the proceeding initiated by Broadcasting and Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-94

Summary

The Commission is an administrative tribunal with quasi-judicial functions responsible for regulating the Canadian communications sector. To make decisions in the public interest, the Commission encourages people with a diversity of perspectives to participate in its proceedings.

In this order, the Commission approves interim costs for the Public Interest Advocacy Centre to support its participation in Broadcasting and Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-94. In that proceeding, the Commission is gathering views on how it can better support people, including public interest groups, to participate in its proceedings. Any applicants that receive interim costs will still be required to file for final costs to confirm that the amounts were spent.

Awarding interim costs provides groups who represent the public interest with funding up front, which can help support their participation and encourage broader participation from those who might otherwise not participate.

Background

1. In Broadcasting and Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-94, the Commission created a simplified process for awarding costs to encourage broader participation. All costs applications are being reviewed and processed using the telecommunications costs process.
2. Applicants must demonstrate that they meet most of the criteria for interim costs awards set out in section 63 of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure*. Specifically, they must show that they will represent a group or class of subscribers that has an interest in the outcome of the proceeding and that they can assist the Commission in developing a better understanding of the matters to be considered. They must also undertake to participate in the proceeding in a responsible way. However, applicants do not need to show that they have insufficient financial resources to participate effectively in the proceeding without these costs.

3. The Commission named the following parties as the most likely parties to be required to pay any interim costs awarded by the Commission (costs respondents):
 - Bell Canada;
 - Cogeco Connexion Inc.;
 - Quebecor Media Inc.;
 - Rogers Communications Canada Inc. (Rogers);
 - Saskatchewan Telecommunications; and
 - TELUS Communications Inc. (TELUS).

Application

4. The Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) applied for interim costs with respect to its participation in Broadcasting and Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-94 (the proceeding). In the proceeding, the Commission is gathering views on how it can better support people, including public interest groups, to participate in its proceedings.
5. PIAC submitted that it meets the simplified criteria for interim costs set out in Broadcasting and Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-94.
6. PIAC submitted that it represents the interests of all consumers across Canada with a particular focus on low-income consumers. PIAC also outlined that it has a long history of representing both individual and organizational¹ consumers in Commission proceedings and advocating for increased competition, consumer choice, and affordability.
7. PIAC submitted that it will provide a public interest perspective by conducting research on different costs models used by other regulators and research the historical basis and importance of funding regimes for public interest intervenors. It will also investigate the needs and considerations of vulnerable public interest intervenors and determine how they can be addressed in a new funding regime.
8. PIAC requested that the Commission fix its interim costs at \$8,548.75, consisting entirely of legal fees. PIAC filed an estimated bill of costs with its application.

¹ Alberta Council on Aging, Canadian Pensioners Concerned, Dying with Dignity Canada, Federation of Metro Tenants Association, Ontario Society of Senior Citizens Organizations, PEI Council of People with Disabilities, and Rural Dignity of Canada.

9. PIAC claimed that its submission will take approximately 80 hours of work consisting of 20 hours of work from outside legal counsel, 30 hours of work from in-house legal counsel, and 30 hours of work from an articling student.
10. PIAC submitted that responsibility for payment should be shared proportionately among all costs respondents based on the most recent data provided to the Commission by the telecommunications service providers.

Answer

11. TELUS filed an intervention, dated 23 June 2025, in response to the applications submitted by the Canadian Anti-Monopoly Project, and the Deaf Wireless Canada Consultative Committee, and PIAC. TELUS did not object to PIAC's eligibility for interim costs payments or the amount PIAC claimed. It did, however, argue that the Commission should call on the Broadcasting Participation Fund (BPF) to review the costs and provide up to 50% of the claimed amount because the proceeding concerns both telecommunications and broadcasting. Rogers also replied and did not object to PIAC's interim costs application.

Commission's analysis

12. The Commission considers that PIAC demonstrated that it meets the streamlined criteria set out in Broadcasting and Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-94. More specifically, PIAC represents the broad range of perspectives held by consumers across Canada with a focus on low-income consumers, which will contribute to a better understanding of the matters being considered by the Commission.
13. Moreover, PIAC proposed to use the interim funds it receives to research:
 - costs models used by other regulators,
 - the historical basis for funding frameworks and their impact on public interest intervenors,
 - the measures designed to transition from current rates for public interest intervenors to a new costs framework, and
 - how to best address the needs of vulnerable public interest intervenors with a new costs framework.
14. The rates claimed for interim costs are generally in accordance with the rates established in the *Guidelines for the Assessment of Costs* as set out in Telecom Regulatory Policy 2010-963. The Commission finds that the total interim amount claimed by PIAC should be allowed.
15. The Commission notes that PIAC must be able to collect any awarded interim costs in a timely manner to participate effectively in the proceeding. Given the circumstances,

the Commission considers it appropriate to limit the interim costs respondents to those previously identified in paragraph 3.

16. Regarding TELUS's proposal to have BPF provide 50% of the costs in the proceeding, the Commission determined that it would be more efficient from an administrative standpoint to rely exclusively on the telecom costs regime to determine how to award interim costs. While the Commission has split costs between the BPF and its own telecom costs award process for combined proceedings in the past, it is not necessary to do so in the proceeding because the issues are so intertwined.
17. Consistent with its practice, the Commission considers it appropriate to allocate responsibility for the payment of costs among costs respondents based on their telecommunications operating revenues (TORs) as an indicator of the relative size and interest of the parties involved in the proceeding).²
18. As set out in Telecom Order 2015-160, the Commission considers \$1,000 to be the minimum amount that a costs respondent should be required to pay due to the administrative burden that small costs awards impose on both the applicant and costs respondents.
19. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the responsibility for payment of interim costs should be allocated as follows:³

Company	Proportion	Amount
Rogers ⁴	41.43%	\$3,541.75
TELUS	35.17%	\$3,006.59
Bell Canada	23.40%	\$2,000.41

20. PIAC will need to apply for final costs at the end of the proceeding. This means that PIAC will be required to demonstrate how it assisted the Commission in developing a better understanding of the matters to be considered, account for the amount claimed using written documentation, and demonstrate that it spent the funds provided responsibly. At that time, the Commission will consider how to allocate costs amongst costs respondents most appropriately. The costs respondents will bear the costs of any reallocation as appropriate.

² TORs consist of Canadian telecommunications revenues from local and access, long distance, data, private line, Internet, and wireless services.

³ In this order, the Commission has used the 2023 TORs of the costs respondents based on their most recently audited financial statements.

⁴ The Commission notes that since the 2023 TORs were reported, ownership transactions have changed the makeup of Rogers. As a result, Shaw Group's and Shaw Telecom G.P.'s TORs have been added to Rogers'.

Directions regarding costs

21. The Commission approves the application by PIAC for interim costs with respect to its participation in the proceeding.
22. Pursuant to subsection 56(1) of the *Telecommunications Act*, the Commission fixes the interim costs to be paid to PIAC at \$8,548.75.
23. The Commission directs that the award of interim costs to PIAC be paid forthwith by Rogers Communications Canada Inc., TELUS Communications Inc., and Bell Canada according to the proportions set out in paragraph 19.
24. PIAC is directed to file an application for final costs no later than 30 days after the close of the record in the proceeding.

Secretary General

Related documents

- *Call for comments – A new approach to funding public interest participation in Commission proceedings*, Broadcasting and Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-94, 12 May 2025
- *Determination of costs award with respect to the participation of the Ontario Video Relay Service Committee in the proceeding initiated by Telecom Notice of Consultation 2014-188*, Telecom Order CRTC 2015-160, 23 April 2015
- *Revision of CRTC costs award practices and procedures*, Telecom Regulatory Policy CRTC 2010-963, 23 December 2010