



## Telecom Order CRTC 2025-217

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Gatineau, 26 August 2025

*File numbers: 1011-NOC2025-0020 and 4754-787*

### **Determination of costs award with respect to the participation of the Public Interest Advocacy Centre in the proceeding initiated by Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-20**

#### **Application**

1. By letter dated 30 April 2025, the Public Interest Advocacy Centre (PIAC) applied for costs with respect to its participation in the proceeding initiated by Telecom Notice of Consultation 2025-20 (the proceeding). In the proceeding, the Commission sought comments on how to improve the routing of 9-8-8 calls and texts.
2. The Commission did not receive any interventions in response to the application for costs.
3. PIAC submitted that it had met the criteria for an award of costs set out in section 68 of the *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Rules of Practice and Procedure* (the Rules of Procedure) because it represented a group or class of subscribers that had an interest in the outcome of the proceeding, it had assisted the Commission in developing a better understanding of the matters that were considered, and it had participated in a responsible way.
4. In particular, PIAC submitted that it represents the interests of consumers across Canada, including low-income and vulnerable consumers who are relatively more prone to mental health crisis and distress.
5. With respect to the group or class of subscribers that PIAC has submitted it represents, PIAC explained that this group or class consists of all consumers across Canada, with a particular focus on low-income consumers. PIAC represents a number of individual and organizational members and is held accountable for its representation of the public interest through a volunteer board of directors drawn from across Canada.
6. PIAC requested that the Commission fix its costs at \$2,581.90, consisting entirely of legal fees. PIAC's claim included the Ontario Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) on fees, minus the rebate to which PIAC is entitled in connection with the HST. PIAC filed a bill of costs with its application.
7. PIAC claimed 0.7 hours for an external counsel at a rate of \$250 per hour for work preparing the intervention, reply comments and case management (\$181.90 with the

HST and associated rebate), and 4 days at a rate of \$600 per day to review the file, prepare the intervention and comments, carry out legal research, and prepare draft comments.

8. PIAC submitted that the telecommunications service providers who participated in the proceeding are the appropriate parties to be required to pay any costs awarded by the Commission (the costs respondents).

### **Commission's analysis**

9. The criteria for an award of costs are set out in section 68 of the Rules of Procedure, which reads as follows:
  68. The Commission must determine whether to award final costs and the maximum percentage of costs that is to be awarded on the basis of the following criteria:
    - (a) whether the applicant had, or was the representative of a group or a class of subscribers that had, an interest in the outcome of the proceeding;
    - (b) the extent to which the applicant assisted the Commission in developing a better understanding of the matters that were considered; and
    - (c) whether the applicant participated in the proceeding in a responsible way.
10. In Telecom Information Bulletin 2016-188, the Commission provided guidance regarding how an applicant may demonstrate that it satisfies the first criterion with respect to its representation of interested subscribers. In the present case, PIAC has demonstrated that it meets this requirement. PIAC represented the interests of all consumers across Canada with a particular focus on low-income consumers.
11. PIAC has also satisfied the remaining criteria through its participation in the proceeding. PIAC contributed arguments in support of the use of local direct inward dialing for 9-8-8 routing to improve consumers' access to emergency services should they need it, provided that individual Canadians' privacy is strictly safeguarded. PIAC submitted that it is important that any messaging to the public is clear in telling Canadians that 9-8-8 is available 24/7, and that their exact location would remain anonymous even with any new routing process. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the applicant meets the criteria for an award of costs under section 68 of the Rules of Procedure.
12. The rates claimed in respect of legal fees are 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 amount claimed by PIAC was necessarily and reasonably incurred and should be allowed.

13. This is an appropriate case in which to fix the costs and dispense with taxation, in accordance with the streamlined procedure set out in Telecom Public Notice 2002-5.
14. The Commission has generally determined that the appropriate costs respondents to an award of costs are the parties that have a significant interest in the outcome of the proceeding in question and have participated actively in that proceeding. The Commission considers that the following parties had a significant interest in the outcome of the proceeding and participated actively in the proceeding: Bell Canada, including Bell Mobility Inc.; Bragg Communications Inc., carrying on business as Eastlink; Quebecor Media Inc., on behalf of its affiliates Videotron Ltd. and Freedom Mobile Inc. and their brands Fizz and VMedia; Rogers Communications Canada Inc., including Shaw Cablesystems G.P. and Groupe Shaw Group (Rogers);<sup>1</sup> Saskatchewan Telecommunications; TBayTel; and TELUS Communications Inc.
15. The Commission considers that, consistent with its practice, it is appropriate to allocate the responsibility for 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.<sup>2</sup>
16. However, 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.
17. Accordingly, the Commission finds that the responsibility for payment of costs should be allocated as follows:<sup>3</sup>

<b>Company</b>	<b>Proportion</b>	<b>Amount</b>
Bell Canada	54.02%	\$1,394.74
Rogers	45.98%	\$1,187.16

### **Directions regarding costs**

18. The Commission approves the application by PIAC for costs with respect to its participation in the proceeding.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the 2023 telecommunications operating revenues (TORs) were reported, ownership transactions have changed the makeup of Rogers. As a result, Shaw Cablesystems G.P.'s TORs have been added to Rogers'.

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

<sup>3</sup> In this order, the Commission has used the TORs of the costs respondents based on their most recent audited financial statements.

19. Pursuant to subsection 56(1) of the *Telecommunications Act*, the Commission fixes the costs to be paid to PIAC at \$2,581.90.
20. The Commission directs that the award of costs to PIAC be paid forthwith by Bell Canada and Rogers Communications Canada Inc. according to the proportions set out in paragraph 17.

Secretary General

### **Related documents**

- *Call for comments – Improving the routing of 9-8-8 calls and texts*, Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-20, 27 January 2025, as amended by Telecom Notice of Consultation CRTC 2025-20-1, 7 March 2025
- *Guidance for costs award applicants regarding representation of a group or a class of subscribers*, Telecom Information Bulletin CRTC 2016-188, 17 May 2016
- *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
- *New procedure for Telecom costs awards*, Telecom Public Notice CRTC 2002-5, 7 November 2002