**Section 288.250 Award Payments**

a) Unless the Commission enters upon a hearing concerning the propriety of an award within 45 days after the Administrator submits an award recommendation to the Commission, the CIR shall be issued the recommended award within 75 days after the Administrator provides the Commission an award recommendation with any necessary adjustments to account for compensation provided prior to the Commission's final order after denial or decision on rehearing in the proceeding.

b) The Commission may, without answer or other pleadings but upon reasonable notice, initiate a hearing concerning the propriety of an award either on its own initiative or in response to a complaint. In determining the grant of awards, the Commission shall consider the following:

1) The impact the requesting CIR's advocacy had on the outcome of the matter before the Commission, as reflected in the Final Order, with respect to a significant issue in the docket; and the extent to which that impact made a meaningful advancement of public policy in light of the goals and aspirations outlined in the Act;

2) The financial ability of the requesting CIR, and the imposition of the financial hardship that the Consumer Interest Representative would incur to the extent no award was granted;

3) The CIR's eligibility, as set forth in Section 9-229 of the Act;

4) The location of the residential utility customers represented by the CIR relative to the geographic locations or service territories affected by the matter for which the award is sought; and

5) The reasonableness of the fees for which reimbursement is sought, the long-term financial solvency of the Fund, and the economic imposition on utilities and the public.

c) Complaints regarding an award recommendation made by the Administrator must be filed with the Commission within 30 days after the Administrator files the award recommendation in eDocket.

d) If the Commission enters upon a hearing concerning the propriety of an award, the Commission's Order shall indicate whether the award of compensation is granted, denied, or granted in part and denied in part, and shall indicate that amount awarded, if anything and the CIR shall be issued the award within 30 days of the Commission's final determination regarding the award with any necessary adjustments to account for any previously provided compensation.

e) In no event shall an award be issued that exceeds the amount of available monies in the Fund, with awards issued based upon the order in which notices of compensation to be paid from the Fund are received from the Administrator by the Executive Director or a designee until the funds are exhausted.

f) The Administrator shall notify the Executive Director and the Director of the Commission's Administrative Services Division when compensation is to be paid from the Fund. The notification shall include:

1) The name of the CIR to be paid;

2) The address to which payment should be sent;

3) The amount of compensation to be provided;

4) The balance that will remain in the Fund after the compensation is provided;

5) A copy of the verified request for reimbursement from the Fund by a CIR;

6) A copy of the CIR's Form W-9 containing its taxpayer identification number;

7) A copy of the Administrator's award recommendation; and

8) Copies of the itemized request for compensation including, but not limited to, the applicable Commission docket number; each advocate's, attorney's, or lay or expert witness's name, work title, fee rate per hour, number of hours expended, specific tasks performed in the applicable Commission docket; the specific issue each task addressed, and other eligible costs for reimbursement.

g) When the Administrator notifies the Executive Director and the Director of the Commission's Administrative Services Division that compensation is to be paid from the Fund, the Administrator shall clearly identify any information provided to the Executive Director and the Director of the Commission's Administrative Services Division considered confidential, proprietary or a trade secret.

(Source: Added at 47 Ill. Reg. 5619, effective April 7, 2023)