



ROYALTIES, FULLY EXPLAINED

1 song.

2 copyrights.

12 ways

to get paid.

Every royalty your music can earn, what it's called, and how to collect it.



Every song has

2 copyrights.

COPYRIGHT 1

The master

The recording itself

Usually owned by the artist or
their record label

COPYRIGHT 2

The composition

The song: melody and lyrics

Owned by the songwriters,
and their publisher if they
have one

Think of them as two sides: the recording side and the song side.
Each earns its own money, collected by different organizations.



COPYRIGHT 1 • THE MASTER

The recording earns 6 ways.

01 Streaming and download payouts

Spotify, Apple, YouTube Music • via your distributor

02 Digital performance royalties

Pandora, SiriusXM, online radio • via SoundExchange

03 Neighboring rights

Radio, TV and venues outside the US • via SoundExchange or an agency

04 YouTube Content ID earnings

Videos that use your recording • via your distributor

05 Social video royalties (also called micro-sync)

TikTok, Instagram and Facebook • via your distributor

06 Master sync fees

Your recording in film, TV, ads and games • paid in a sync deal



COPYRIGHT 2 • THE COMPOSITION

The song earns 6 ways.

01 Performance royalties

Radio, TV, live shows, streams • via your PRO

02 Mechanical royalties

US streams and downloads • via The MLC

03 YouTube publishing royalties

The song's share of YouTube ads • via your publisher or admin

04 Social video publishing royalties

TikTok and Instagram • via your publisher or admin

05 Publishing sync fees

Your song in film, TV, ads and games • paid in a sync deal

06 Print and lyric royalties

Sheet music and lyrics in apps • via your publisher or admin



SPOTLIGHT • SOUNDEXCHANGE

Digital radio splits 3 ways.

50%

The master owner
label or self-
released artist

45%

The featured artist
you, if you sing or
rap on it

5%

Session players
non-featured
musicians and
singers

Registering is free. Own your master? Register as both the artist and the master owner to collect 95%.



SPOTLIGHT • SOCIAL VIDEO

TikTok and Reels pay when people use your track.

01 Recording side

Your distributor sends the track and collects what it earns

02 Song side

Your publisher or admin collects the song's share, if they have a deal with the app

TikTok splits a pool by how many videos use your track. Instagram and Facebook pay when it is used in a video, Reel or Story. If your distributor doesn't send it there, it earns nothing.



SPOTLIGHT • YOUTUBE

YouTube pays both sides.

01 Recording side

Content ID claims videos that use your track, through your distributor. Leased beats don't qualify.

02 Song side

The ad share via your publisher or admin, performance royalties via your PRO, and mechanicals via The MLC

Fan uploads, covers and edits all count. Shorts pay from a shared pool.



YOUR CHECKLIST

6 sign-ups to get paid.

01 A distributor

Streams, Content ID, social video

02 SoundExchange

As both artist and master owner. Free.

03 A PRO (performing rights organization)

ASCAP or BMI for most indie writers

04 The MLC

If no publisher or admin collects for you

05 A publishing administrator (admin)

Worldwide, YouTube and social video

06 Neighboring rights

Outside the US, via SoundExchange or an agency



Know what you are owed.

Save this

Send it to your co-writer

Sources: US Copyright Office, SoundExchange, The MLC, YouTube

6 sign-ups to get paid.

☐ **A distributor**

Streams, Content ID, social video

☐ **SoundExchange**

As the artist, and as the master owner if you own your recordings. Free.

☐ **A PRO (performing rights organization)**

ASCAP or BMI for most indie writers

☐ **The MLC**

If no publisher or admin collects for you

☐ **A publishing administrator (admin)**

Worldwide, YouTube and social video

☐ **Neighboring rights**

Outside the US, via SoundExchange or an agency

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