

U.S. Copyright Office Fees Set to Rise Nearly 43% This November

Rights holders have until September 10 to register catalogs at current USCO rates through Cosynd's bulk filing service before fees rise.

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 31, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Music organizations spent much of 2026 challenging the U.S. Copyright Office's ([USCO](#)) proposed fee increases, arguing that higher registration costs would disproportionately burden independent labels, artists, and songwriters. The campaign did not stop the USCO from submitting its final fee schedule proposal to Congress in July, but it helped focus attention on the registration system's affordability and may have tempered some proposed increases for musical works.



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Cosynd

Unless Congress intervenes during its 120-day review window, the new fee schedule will take effect in mid-November. Rights holders looking to register at the current rates should begin identifying unregistered works and organizing catalog data before the increase takes hold.

Rights holders that provide their catalog data to [Cosynd](#), a platform that simplifies copyright registration, before September 10 can access current, lower filing rates through its bulk registration capability and have their filings submitted under the existing fee structure. With

roughly two weeks remaining, the deadline is especially relevant for catalog owners with unregistered masters, compositions, or incomplete chain-of-title documentation.

This new deadline arrives right as copyright registration is becoming a litigation issue. A copyright owner generally must obtain registration before bringing a U.S. federal infringement lawsuit. Copyright registration is also required to participate in most class actions, as well as to

file a claim with the Copyright Claims Board ([CCB](#)), the USCO's small claims tribunal. Timely registration can also determine whether a claimant may seek statutory damages, which can reach \$150,000 per infringed work in qualifying cases, plus attorney's fees.

The Warner Music Group settlement with cookie chain Crumbl illustrates the exposure issue created by unlicensed music use in social campaigns. WMG sued Crumbl over 159 recordings and compositions used in TikTok and Instagram promos, initially seeking statutory damages of up to \$150,000 for each infringed work.

Meanwhile in Germany, collecting society GEMA won a Munich Regional Court ruling against AI music generator Suno. The court ordered Suno to disclose revenue and pay damages, finding it liable for alleged unauthorized training and output conduct involving GEMA-represented works. While Suno is expected to appeal, the decision underscores the growing exposure facing AI companies that train material on protected music. This case also reinforces why labels and publishers need clear, current copyright registration records before infringement disputes emerge. More than 1,800 artists are supporting related class-action lawsuits against Suno and Udio in the United States.

Separately, Round Hill Music has filed copyright infringement lawsuits against Suno and Anthropic in the U.S. District Court of California. The action adds to the expanding group of rights holders challenging artificial intelligence companies over the alleged use of protected music in training data and generated outputs. Round Hill Music says it initially identified 500 'bell-weather' musical compositions, but Round Hill says it may need to amend the case to include 10,000 or more compositions and sound recordings, with statutory damages potentially exceeding \$1 billion.

Cosynd has worked alongside law firms involved in several of these ongoing AI-related lawsuits, providing registration and ownership documentation that becomes foundational once litigation is underway.

Each of these cases underscores a basic point: ownership claims are more difficult to enforce when registrations are incomplete, delayed, or absent. A U.S. work must be registered before its owner can file a federal infringement action. That means participation in high-stakes claims over unauthorized use, AI training data, or allegedly infringing outputs can hinge on having that copyright registration already in place.

The USCO's examination process can take months, making reactive registration a weak strategy once a dispute has already surfaced. The strongest remedies also depend on timing. Registering before infringement begins, or within three months of a work's first publication, generally preserves eligibility for statutory damages and attorney's fees. Registration after infringement may still support a claim, but it can substantially narrow what a rights holder can recover.

This proposed fee schedule will be the USCO's first major fee adjustment since 2020. The

increases are intended to recover more of the costs of providing registration and recordation services, which it attributes to inflation, labor expenses, and modernization work. The USCO has moderated some of its steepest increases for musical works in response to public comments, but not for sound recordings.

The overall increase has been described as approximately 43% across all USCO fee categories. But 55% is closer to the increase for services crafted specifically for music IP owners. The Standard Application, which can be used to register a single work or a group of works sharing the same author, owner, and release date—such as the sound recordings or compositions on an album—sees its fees rise from \$65 to \$85. Several group registration and recordation fees relevant to music catalogs are also increasing.

Standard Application (electronic filing): \$65 → \$85

Group registration of musical works on an album, up to 20 works: \$65 → \$85

GRAM group registration of sound recordings on an album, up to 20 recordings: \$65 → \$130

Group registration of unpublished works, up to 10 works: \$85 → \$130

Expedited handling: \$800 → \$1,100

Electronic recordation of a document: \$95 → \$215

The GRAM increase is especially consequential. A single group application can cover up to 20 recordings from an album, along with related photographs, artwork, and liner notes. Under the proposed fee schedule, that filing cost moves from \$65 to \$130.

Recordation is also becoming materially more expensive. The electronic base fee for recording a document, including an assignment or transfer of ownership, rises from \$95 to \$215. That affects labels, publishers, funds, and buyers working through catalog acquisitions, where recording a transfer can be a central part of establishing a clean public ownership record. That's the kind of due diligence Cosynd has supported in more than \$500 million of catalog merger and acquisition activity to date.

Expedited handling will also rise to \$1,100 from \$800, in addition to the application fee, emphasizing the cost-savings benefits of timely registration. That creates a costly option for right holders that delay registration until a dispute, closing, licensing negotiation, or litigation deadline is already underway.

Rights holders seeking current, lower federal fees can register through Cosynd at a bulk registration discount. Cosynd must receive submissions by September 10. The earlier cutoff gives time to audit the catalog, determine which works have existing registrations, identify gaps, verify ownership and metadata, and prepare eligible applications before the higher fee schedule takes effect.

For labels and catalog owners, the decision is not necessarily whether to register everything immediately. Rather, it is to identify the masters, compositions, and rights transfers that carry

the highest enforcement and commercial value before these costs increase.

Beyond music, Cosynd's work with news and media publishers, including Forbes, USA Today, The Atlantic, Politico, and Condé Nast, has grown over two years. Across both music and media, Cosynd now protects content that reaches more than 3 billion people daily—a signal that copyright protection concerns are extending well beyond music as AI-driven content use accelerates across industries.

About Cosynd

Cosynd is a cloud-based platform that simplifies copyright registration and rights management for creators, labels, publishers, and media companies. Founded in 2016 and based in New York, Cosynd allows users to register works directly with the USCO, build and sign ownership agreements, and maintain clear chain-of-title documentation at a fraction of the time and cost of traditional legal services. The platform helps rights holders establish an enforceable public record of ownership, a critical step for pursuing infringement claims, licensing deals, and catalog transactions. Cosynd currently protects millions of assets for copyright owners in more than 160 countries worldwide.

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