**How to Set Up a Music Publishing Company**

1. Pick one PRO to register with. The easy ones to get set up with are ASCAP and BMI as anyone can join, and you need to be invited to join SESAC and GMR
   1. To start a publishing company at ASCAP, go to <https://www.ascap.com/ome/>. Right now it is FREE to register both (It normally costs $50 to join ASCAP as a writer, $50 to join as a publisher, $100 to join as both.)
   2. To start a publishing company at BMI, go to <https://join.bmi.com/#/publisher>. There is a $150 fee for solely owned publishing companies to affiliate; $250 for partnerships, corporations, and limited-liability companies. There is no fee to affiliate with BMI as a writer.
   3. When you join one of these PROs you will be known as an “affiliate” of them
   4. You cannot join more than one PRO as a writer, but you can join all PROs as a publisher, but only with different, unique names. The only benefit to affiliating with more than one PRO as a publisher is if you are going to be working with writers that are affiliated with those PROs.
2. Choose five potential company names in the event your first choice is taken. You will likely need to be creative in selecting your company name because any name that is identical—or deemed too similar—to an existing music publishing company will be rejected in order to avoid confusion and the potential of payments being issued to the wrong company.
3. After your publishing company’s name has been cleared and your application for affiliation has been accepted, your next step is to complete the paperwork required by the state in which you reside to legally establish yourself as a business. You can learn what your state requires and download the necessary forms by visiting the website of the Secretary of State’s office or the County Clerk. For California, go to <https://www.sos.ca.gov/business-programs/business-entities/starting-business/>.
4. If needed for your bank in order to open an account in the name of your publishing company to receive checks made out to that company (such as from performance and mechanical royalty checks), it may be likely that you will need to file either a “fictitious name statement” or a “dba” (“doing-business-as”) form. Depending upon the requirements in your location, you may also need to publish (in a local trade newspaper) a statement of your intent to do business. Here is a link on how to register a dba in Los Angeles County - <https://apps.lavote.gov/#/>. Give this proof of your music publishing company name to your bank.
5. Register your songs at <https://copyright.gov/> to protect them in the event of an infringement by others and in order to have the infringer pay your legal costs. The cheapest way to do this is electronically at <https://eco.copyright.gov/eService_enu/start.swe?SWECmd=Start&SWEHo=eco.copyright.gov>. It costs $65 for a standard application to do that online. $125 for a paper filing (Forms PA, SR, TX, VA, SE). $85 if you are registering a claim in a group of unpublished works (like an album). $55 if you are registering a claim in a group of published photographs or a claim in a group of unpublished photographs.
6. Register your songs with the PRO you joined.
   1. ASCAP - set up an online account, login and register here - <https://www.ascap.com/member-access>
   2. BMI – set up an online account, login and register here - <https://applications.bmi.com/Security/>
   3. Global Music Rights (GMR) – Log into your client account at <https://paymenthub.exactuals.com/gmr/login>
   4. SESAC – Log into your affiliate account at <https://affiliates.sesac.com/login>
7. Report to the PROs when you perform your songs live
   1. ASCAP OnStage - <https://www.ascap.com/music-creators/ascap-onstage>
   2. BMI Live - <https://www.bmi.com/special/bmi_live>
8. Write songs and collect royalties from many different sources! - <https://dittomusic.com/en/blog/how-to-make-money-from-music>