The Artist Royalty & Release Kit

Rollout Free Kit | A practical guide for independent artists



Your music. Your rights. Your release.

Understand the royalty routes, organize your registrations and keep your next release on track. Use the worksheets inside for each song.

PRO / The MLC / SoundExchange / Distributor / Sync

Free to download from rolloutheaven.com/contracts. No signup.

Start here

Keep the song, the recording and the paperwork connected.

Work through the registration steps once, then copy the tracker and release checklist for each song. Check existing releases too: missing or mismatched records can delay royalty payments.

01 Where your money is hiding

Know which rights you own and which organizations handle each type of royalty.

02 The registration order

Set up the accounts you need, then register the music you control.

03 The per song registration tracker

Keep titles, owners, IDs and registration confirmations together.

04 The split sheet

Agree on the composition shares and get everyone's signature.

05 The metadata cheat sheet

Keep ISRC, ISWC, IPI and UPC in the right places.

06 The 30 day release checklist

Prepare the files, plan the release and check the registrations afterward.

This guide focuses on the U.S. system. Your contracts, territory and organization rules affect what you can collect. Registration does not guarantee earnings, recover every past royalty or replace clearance of rights.

01 Where your money is hiding

Start with two copyrights: the composition and the sound recording.

The composition

The melody and lyrics belong to their writers or the owners to whom those rights were assigned. Your publisher or administrator may handle some registrations. Check your existing deals first.

The master recording

The recorded performance has its own ownership. The artist, producer, label or another party may own it. The signed agreements determine who controls each share.

Performance | composition | your PRO

PROs such as ASCAP and BMI handle public performance royalties for songs under their rules and licenses.

Mechanical | composition | The MLC and others

The MLC handles eligible U.S. digital audio mechanical royalties. Physical products, other uses and other countries can require different licenses or collection routes.

Digital performance | master | SoundExchange

SoundExchange distributes eligible U.S. royalties from noninteractive digital uses to featured artists and sound recording owners. This differs from on demand streaming through a distributor.

Streaming and downloads | master | your distributor

Your distributor delivers the recording and accounts for the master revenue it collects, according to your distribution deal.

Sync | composition and master | the rights owners

Music placed with video generally needs permission for both the song and the recording. Fees and terms are negotiated; placement is not guaranteed.

Check for unmatched or unclaimed royalties with each organization. Availability, deadlines and claim requirements differ. Do not assume money is waiting or that every past use can still be claimed.

02 The registration order

Confirm existing representation before creating duplicate claims.

1. Choose a PRO

Compare membership terms, territories and current fees on the official sites. Confirm how your PRO handles writer and publisher shares when you have no publisher. Record your member number and IPI. A separate publisher account is not a universal requirement to receive every share.

2. Check The MLC

If you administer your own songs, join as a self administered member to register and claim the shares you control. If a publisher or administrator handles them, coordinate with that representative. Joining is free; the Songwriter Hub also offers visibility into registered works.

3. Check SoundExchange

Register in each role you actually hold: featured artist, sound recording owner, or both. Review the repertoire and claims associated with your account. Confirm whether an existing representative already collects a share for you.

4. Confirm your distributor

Check delivery rules, fees, accounting and any publishing or collection add ons. Record the ISRC for each recording and UPC for the release. Compare coverage before buying overlapping services.

5. Register each release

Use the signed splits and accurate owner information. Match the recording to the composition where supported. Save confirmations, review unmatched works and resolve conflicts instead of creating duplicate registrations.

Fees, payment policies and claim periods change. Check the official sources on page 8 before acting. Keep account recovery and tax details secure; do not put passwords in this kit.

03 Per song registration tracker

Save a fresh copy for each song. Check each item after confirming its status.

Song title

Artist / project

Release date

Recording ISRC

Release UPC

Composition ISWC (when assigned)

PRO work number

Writers and composition shares, total 100%

Publishers / administrators and controlled shares

Master owners and shares

- [ ] PRO registration confirmed
- [ ] MLC registration / representative confirmed, if applicable
- [ ] SoundExchange repertoire / claims checked, if applicable
- [ ] Distributor delivery and credits checked

Confirmation references, missing items or disputes

04 The split sheet

Write shares of the whole composition. Total 100%. Keep master ownership separate.

Song title

Date

Writer 1: legal name

PRO / IPI

Song share %

Signature

Date

Writer 2: legal name

PRO / IPI

Song share %

Signature

Date

Writer 3: legal name

PRO / IPI

Song share %

Signature

Date

Writer 4: legal name

PRO / IPI

Song share %

Signature

Date

Publisher / other rights or notes (write None if none)

Each signer agrees to the composition shares above and confirms authority over their share. Existing publisher and other owner rights need those owners' approval. This sheet does not transfer master rights or clear samples. Changes need written agreement from all affected owners. Attach signed pages for extra contributors.

Standalone contracts: rolloutheaven.com/contracts

Have a music attorney review the deal before signing.

05 The metadata cheat sheet

Use the same accurate names and IDs wherever you register the release.

ISRC | identifies a recording

Keep this with the master audio file and distributor record. A new recording generally needs its own code; do not create a new code just because the same recording moves to another distributor.

ISWC | identifies a musical work

This refers to the composition, not the audio file. Record it when assigned through the relevant registration system. Different recordings can relate to the same musical work.

IPI / CAE | identifies a rights holder

Use the correct writer or publisher identifier from their society records. Do not substitute a member account number or guess another person's IPI.

UPC | identifies a release

Keep this with the single, EP or album record. Your distributor may supply it or accept a valid code you provide. Confirm current terms and costs.

Credits and ownership

Use legal names for contracts and registrations, stage names for public credits, and the signed composition and master shares for each recording. Credit alone does not prove ownership.

Keep one shared release folder with the audio, cover license, signed agreements, metadata and registration confirmations. Share access only with the people who need it.

06 The 30 day release checklist

Adjust the timing for your distributor, collaborators and release plan.

About 30 days before

- [ ] Approve the final master and required export formats.
- [ ] Sign splits and clear beats, samples, features and cover art.
- [ ] Upload with enough lead time for your distributor.

About 21 days before

- [ ] Check names, credits, ISRC and UPC in the tracker.
- [ ] Register the rights you control with the relevant organizations.
- [ ] Check current platform pitch deadlines and submit if eligible.

About 14 to 7 days before

- [ ] Test release links and prepare your announcement.
- [ ] Prepare clips, artwork and a realistic promotion schedule.

Release day and week

- [ ] Check the live audio, credits and links on each platform.
- [ ] Share the release and follow up with your listeners.

About 30 days after

- [ ] Check registration status, matches and ownership conflicts.
- [ ] Save statements and follow up on missing records.

Official sources and next steps

ASCAP
BMI
The MLC
SoundExchange
U.S. Copyright Office

Free contracts: rolloutheaven.com/contracts | Creator studio: rolloutheaven.com/live