

# Using the Single Application

The single application is a simplified option for registering simple claims in one work (not made for hire) by a single author who is also the sole owner of all rights in the work. It is available only for works meeting the Copyright Office's eligibility requirements. This circular provides a guide to determining whether or not a work meets those requirements. It covers

- Works that may be eligible
- Works that are not eligible
- Procedure to use the single application

The single application is a simplified option for online registration of simple claims in one work (not made for hire) by a single author who is also the sole owner of all rights in the work (no rights may have been transferred to another person or entity). It is available only for claims that meet the Copyright Office's eligibility requirements.<sup>1</sup> For most works, the standard application is most appropriate and provides more options. Multiple works and certain other types of works are not eligible for the single application because they create a more complex claim that takes additional time to examine.

**NOTE:** The fee for the single application is different from the standard filing fee for registration. Applicants who mistakenly use the single application are required to pay the full standard filing fee before their registration will be completed. Copyright Office fees are subject to change. For current fees, see *Copyright Office Fees (Circular 4)*, available on the Office's website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov) or call the Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free).

The eligibility requirements for a single application are

- The application must be submitted online.
- Only one work can be registered (excludes collections of individual works).
- The work must be by a single author (excludes joint works and works made for hire and may also exclude derivative works based on another author's work).
- All the authorship contained in the work and in the deposit must be by the same author (there can be no performers in the work other than the author).
- The author and the owner or the claimant must be the same individual.
- The application must be submitted by the author, the claimant, or an authorized third party who lists itself as the correspondent.

## Works That May Be Eligible

Examples of works that may be eligible for the single application if all of the material in the work was created and is owned by a single author include:

For literary works

- one article
- one nonfiction monograph
- one essay
- one novel
- one poem
- one short story

For motion pictures and audiovisual works

- one audiovisual work
- one video game
- one motion picture created by one author where the author is the only person shown in the work.

**NOTE:** Most motion pictures are not eligible for the single application.

For performing arts works

- one song with music and lyrics, if any, by the same author
- one instrumental composition
- one screenplay
- one script
- one treatment

**NOTE:** If the performing arts work is recorded, the author of the performing arts work must be the only performer featured in the recording.

For sound recordings

- one sound recording where the author is the only performer featured in the recording
- one song and sound recording where the same individual is the author of both the song and the sound recording, and that individual is the only performer featured in the recording

**NOTE:** Most sound recordings are not eligible for the single application.

For visual arts works

- one carpet design
- one drawing (not multiple drawings on a single page)
- one fabric design
- one logo
- one photograph
- one map
- one technical drawing of one object
- one piece of jewelry (not a collection or set of multiple jewelry pieces)
- one poster
- one sculpture
- one wallpaper design

### **Multiple Types of Authorship**

If your work constitutes a single work that includes interdependent or inseparable elements of authorship by the same author, you can use the single application as long as the elements are contained in the work deposited.

Examples of eligible works with multiple types of authorship include

- Musical work where you are the sole author and owner of the lyrics and the music
- Children's book where you are the sole author and owner of the text and illustrations
- Illustrated novel where you are the sole author and owner of the text and illustrations

### **Works That Are Not Eligible**

Types of works that are not eligible for the single application and must be filed on a standard application include

- works by more than one author or performer (e.g., works by multiple performers, writers, artists, or actors)
- works by an author that is not an individual
- works whose author has transferred the copyright to another party
- deposits containing elements by more than one author (e.g., comic book with text and illustrations by two authors)
- works with more than one owner
- derivative works or adaptations of another author's work(s)
- joint works

- works made for hire
- multiple works (e.g., a collection of jewelry, a portfolio of photographs, or a book with an introduction and an afterword by different authors)
- multiple versions of a work
- collective works (e.g., serial publications, anthologies, or albums)
- unpublished collections
- units of publication
- group registration options
- secure tests
- databases
- websites
- choreography

Examples of works that are not eligible for the single application include

For literary works

- two or more poems
- two or more stories
- two or more articles
- collective works
- databases
- dictionaries
- directories
- encyclopedias
- serials
- websites

For motion pictures and audiovisual works

- two or more motion pictures
- motion pictures with multiple authors or performers
- two or more audiovisual works
- more than one version of a motion picture
- more than one version of an audiovisual work
- choreography

For performing arts works

- two or more songs
- songs with different authors of the words and music
- songs or sound recordings by multiple performers

- more than one version of a song
- song and liner notes
- song and cover artwork
- two or more scripts
- two or more treatments
- more than one version of a script
- more than one version of a treatment
- script and accompanying illustrations
- musical play, script, and songs
- choreography

For sound recordings

- sound recordings by multiple performers
- two or more sound recordings
- different versions of a sound recording
- sound recording track(s) and liner notes

For visual arts works

- two or more pieces of jewelry
- two or more photographs
- two or more drawings
- architectural works
- databases

## **Registration Procedure for Single Application**

After you or an authorized third party log into the Copyright Office’s electronic registration system and click on “Register a New Claim,” you will be asked to answer “Yes” or “No” to three questions to determine whether you can use a single application or must use a standard application. The questions are:

1. Are you registering one work (e.g., one song, one poem, or one illustration)? Check “No” to this question if the work is one of the following: a collection of works (e.g., a book of poetry, a CD of songs, or multiple photographs and illustrations), a collective work, a website, or a database. These works do not qualify for the single application.
2. Are you the only author and owner of the work (or the agent of the individual author who is also the only owner)? Check “No” to this question if the work was created by multiple individuals (e.g. multiple performers, artists, or writers) or if any part of this work was prepared as a “work made for hire” for another entity.
3. Does the work you are sending contain material created only by this author? Check “No” to this question if the copy includes more than one performer, writer, artist, or actor, or if it

contains content or contributions by anyone else, even if the claim is limited to only the contribution by this author or the material has been licensed, permissioned, or transferred to the claimant.

If you are able to answer “Yes” to all three questions, you will proceed to use the single application. By following the prompts, you will complete an application meant for one work by a single author who has retained copyright in the work. If, however, you determine that the work is not eligible for the single application, click on “Change Application” and proceed to use the standard application. If you answer “No” to one or more of the three questions above, you will automatically proceed to the standard application. It is the most commonly used application, and it allows you to enter multiple titles, authors, and claimants.

**NOTE:** If your application is submitted by an authorized third party, the third party must list itself as the correspondent in the application.

### **Uploading Multiple Files for One Work**

To complete an application, you must submit a deposit copy of your work. The Office recommends that, when possible, you upload digital files through the electronic registration system rather than submit a physical copy through the mail. In general, works that are eligible for the single application can be uploaded in one digital file, such as one .doc file, one .avi file, one .mp3 file, or one .jpg file. Only in limited cases, where a claimant must upload identifying material containing multiple representations of one work, will registration of an eligible work require uploading multiple files. If you intend to upload more than one file, your claim probably does not meet the single application requirements. Uploading one .zip file containing multiple files will not meet the single application requirements. The application is limited to one work (one item), and cannot be used for one upload that contains multiple works (two or more items).

### **Use of Single Application for Ineligible Works**

Using the single application when a work does not meet all of the eligibility requirements will result in processing delays, an additional fee, and a later effective date of registration based on the date that the Office receives the proper fee. The Office will review single applications to determine if they meet *all* the eligibility requirements. If the Office determines that the work is ineligible for registration on a single application, an examiner will contact you at the email address listed on your application to let you know how to pay the additional fee and resubmit your claim on the standard application. If you do not respond to this communication in a timely fashion, your application may be closed without registration. The Copyright Office will make the final determination on whether or not a work is eligible for registration on the single application.

If you submit a single application and later determine that the work should be registered on a standard application, send an email to [copyinfo@loc.gov](mailto:copyinfo@loc.gov) or contact the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free). Staff members are on duty from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Monday through Friday, Eastern Time, except federal holidays. The staff member will add a note in your registration record to notify the registration staff. Because the Copyright Office handles applications in the order in which they are received, it may take several months for the registration staff to respond to you.

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**NOTE**

1. This circular is intended as an overview of the single application for registration. The authoritative source for U.S. copyright law is the Copyright Act, codified in Title 17 of the *United States Code*. Copyright Office regulations are codified in Title 37 of the *Code of Federal Regulations*. Copyright Office practices and procedures are summarized in the third edition of the *Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices*, cited as the *Compendium*. The copyright law, regulations, and the *Compendium* are available on the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

## **For Further Information**

### ***By Internet***

The copyright law, the *Compendium*, electronic registration, application forms, regulations, and related materials are available on the Copyright Office website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).

### ***By Email***

To send an email inquiry, click the *Contact Us* link on the Copyright Office website.

### ***By Telephone***

For general information, call the Copyright Public Information Office at (202) 707-3000 or 1-877-476-0778 (toll free). Staff members are on duty from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm, Eastern time, Monday through Friday, except federal holidays. To request application forms or circulars by postal mail, call (202) 707-9100 or 1-877-476-0778 and leave a recorded message.

### ***By Regular Mail***

Write to

Library of Congress  
U.S. Copyright Office  
Publications Section  
101 Independence Avenue, SE #6304  
Washington, DC 20559-6304

