

## Copyright Registration

Copyright is defined in *Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary* as “the exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, and sell the matter and form of a literary, musical or artistic work.”

Registering your program with the Copyright Office at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. allows a public record of your registration to be maintained. In the event of a copyright infringement, timely registration may provide a broader range of remedies and is, in fact, required before any suit may be filed (if the work is of U.S. origin).

Copyright in audio-visual works such as motion pictures or video recordings are automatically secured when the work is created and “fixed” in a copy. ITVS requires producers to register the copyright in the program as well as end it with a notice of copyright (see Chapter 8: *Credits, Production Credits and Thank You* section).

Registering your program is not a complicated process. It may take some time before you receive your certificate of registration. You must send the following to the Copyright Office:

1. A signed completed application for copyright, Form PA (a copy of Form PA is included in Chapter 6: *Sample Forms*).
2. A Beta SP video copy of your program. The copyright office used to accept a VHS tape of the finished program (2 copies if published—e.g. commercially available for home video). They have recently been requesting a Beta SP tape as the “best edition” of the program. This means you will need to budget accordingly.
3. A separate written description of the content of your program (the storyline summary that you provided ITVS as a final deliverable is sufficient)
4. A non-refundable filing fee of \$30.00 for each application (check or money order) payable to the Register of Copyrights.
5. Mail your completed application package with payment to:

Library of Congress  
Copyright Office  
101 Independence Avenue, S.E.  
Washington, D.C. 20559-6000

The effective date of registration is the date the Copyright Office receives all of the above-required items. Please note: it can take up to five months for the Copyright Office to process your application and return the certificate of registration to you. You can use a copyright expediter; it will cost around \$580 and you get the certificate of registration in a week. The Screen Actors Guild may require a certificate of registration for a screenplay necessitating an expedited turnaround.