



Guide on Applying Online Under RTI

Contributor: Astha Madan Grover

DECEMBER 2020

How can the guide **help you**?

The **Nyaaya Guide on Applying Online under RTI** provides applicants with the steps to take when seeking information under **the Right To Information Act, 2005**. This guide summarises the processes involved in filing an RTI application online, appeals against certain authorities' decisions, as well as complaint mechanisms for any online grievances. This guide also serves to inform citizens of their rights in seeking information from the central and state governments through their online portals.

What are **the laws** discussed in the guide?

The Nyaaya Guide on Online RTI Applications explains **the Right to Information Act, 2005 and the Right to Information Rules, 2012**.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

Things to Remember Before Applying:	05
• Who can file an RTI application?	05
• What types of information can you ask for through RTI?	05
• What are the types of information you can not ask for through RTI?	06
• Who can you ask information from ?	06
How to File an RTI Application Online	07
After Applying: Tracking and Response	10
• How to track an RTI application?	10
• How long will it take to get a response to the application?	11
Payment Process: For Online Application	12
• How do you pay for an RTI online?	12
• Are there any additional fee payments?	13
• Appeal Process: In Case of Rejection	14
• What is an RTI First Appeal ?	14
• What are the steps to file an RTI First Appeal Online?	15
• What is an RTI Second Appeal ?	16
Resources	17
• Contact Information	17
• Checklists	17
• Sources of Information	18
• Glossary	18

Things to Remember

BEFORE APPLYING

Who can file an RTI application?



Any citizen of India, even citizens who stay abroad, can request information under **the Right to Information Act, 2005**¹.



However, **Overseas Citizens of India (OCI)** and **persons of Indian origin (PIO) with foreign citizenship**, cannot seek information through an RTI².

What **types of information** can you ask for through RTI?

An applicant can ask for information including: copies of government documents, Records, Reports, Papers, File noting, Email communications, Electronic data etc.



For example, an RTI application can **enquire how much money was spent** on a Member of Parliament's official trip abroad.



What are the types of information **you cannot ask for** through RTI?

In some situations, **certain information will not be given** to the applicant. This includes:

- If it would **divert the resources** of public authorities or cause **harm** to the **safety or preservation of public records**.³
- If it affects India's **sovereignty, integrity, security, or economic interest** or leads to the **incitement of an offence**.⁴
- If it is provided in **fiduciary relationships**, or during **commercial transactions**.
- If the disclosure of any information **harms public interest**.⁵

To learn more on **types of information exempted under the law**, read our explanation on [Exempted Information under RTI](#).

Who can you **ask information from**?

Citizens can ask for information from any **public authority**.⁶

A **public authority** is a:

- **Body, institution, or an organization established by the government** under the Indian Constitution or any other law or by way of a notification. For example, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Law Departments in states etc.
- **Government owned, controlled, or substantially governed bodies**. For example, the National Human Rights Commission, Indian Council of Medical Research.
- **Government-financed NGOs**, whether funded directly or indirectly. For example, DAV College Trust and Management Society.

To answer RTI queries public authorities may designate officers as [Public Information Officers \('PIO'\)](#). PIOs are responsible for **providing information to applicants** seeking them.⁷



You **do not need to mention any reason** for asking for any information and must only provide the **necessary personal information** asked for in the application.⁸

RTI Application

HOW TO FILE ONLINE

An online RTI must be filed either through the [rti.gov.in](https://rtionline.gov.in) portal or through RTI portals created by states like, [Delhi](#), [Maharashtra](#), [Karnataka](#).

Follow these **steps to file** an RTI application online:

1. Go to <https://rtionline.gov.in>
2. Click on 'Submit Request'



The screenshot shows the RTI Online portal homepage. At the top, there is a header with the Government of India emblem, a language selector set to 'English', and the text 'Public Authorities Available'. The main title is 'RTI Online' with 'Version 2.0' and 'An Initiative of Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India' below it. A navigation menu includes 'Home', 'Submit Request', 'Submit First Appeal', 'View Status', 'View History', 'User Manual', and 'FAQ'. A green arrow points to the 'Submit Request' link. Below the navigation, there is a message: 'Applicants can now pay the prescribed RTI fee'. A red warning box states: 'Please do not file RTI applications through this portal for the public authorities under the State Governments, including Government of NCT Delhi. If filed, the application would be returned, without refund of amount.' A text box explains the portal's purpose and provides instructions: 'This is a portal to file RTI applications/first appeals online along with payment gateway. Payment can be made through internet banking of SBI, debit/credit cards of Master/Visa and RuPay cards. Through this portal, RTI applications/first appeals can be filed by Indian Citizens for all Ministries/Departments and other Public Authorities of Central Government. RTI applications/first appeals should not be filed for other Public authorities under Central/State Govt. through this portal. Please read instructions carefully while submitting request/appeal.' To the right, there is a 'Click here for Submit Request' link and a login form with fields for 'Username:' and 'Password:', and a 'Sign In' button. Below the login form, there is a link: 'Click here.>View History to view your past Request/Appeal details.' At the bottom, a 'Help Desk' section provides contact information: 'Help Desk : For any query or feedback related to this portal, Please contact at 011-24622461, during normal office hours (9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Monday to Friday except Public Holidays) or send an email to help@rtionline-dopt[at]nic[dot]in'. The footer contains 'Home | National Portal of India | Complaint & Second Appeal to CIC | FAQ' and 'Copyright © 2013. All rights reserved. Designed, Developed and Hosted by National Informatics Centre, New Delhi'.



3. Read the [guidelines](#) for using the RTI Online Portal.
4. Click on the checkbox 'I have read and understood the above guidelines' and then click on the **submit button**.

18. The applicant/the appellant should submit his/her mobile number to receive SMS alert.
 19. Status of the RTI application/first appeal filed online can be seen by the applicant/appellant by clicking at "View Status".
 20. All the requirements for filing an RTI application and first appeal as well as other provisions regarding time limit, exemptions etc., as provided in the RTI Act, 2005 will continue to apply.

I have read and understood the above guidelines.

5. Select the **Ministry or Department** for which you want to file an RTI application.
6. Select the **relevant public authority**.

* Select Ministry/Department/Apex body	Ministry of Tribal Affairs
* Select Public Authority <i>(Your Request will be filed with this selected Public Authority)</i>	National Commission for Scheduled Tribes



For example, for the **Ministry of Tribal Affairs**, the options for public authority available include **National Commission for Scheduled Tribes** and the **Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Ltd (TRIFED)**.


Personal Details of RTI Applicant:-

Name	Enter Name
Gender	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Male <input type="radio"/> Female
* Address	Enter address ?
Pincode	<input type="text"/> Enter pincode ?
Country	<input checked="" type="radio"/> India <input type="radio"/> Other
State	--Select--
Status	<input type="radio"/> Rural <input type="radio"/> Urban
Educational Status	<input type="radio"/> Literate <input type="radio"/> Illiterate
Phone Number	+91 <input type="text"/> Enter phone number ?
Mobile Number <i>(For receiving SMS alerts)</i>	+91 <input type="text"/> Enter mobile number ?
* Email-ID	e.g user@domain.com ?
* Confirm Email-ID	<input type="text"/> ?

7. **Fill in details** including name, gender, address, pin code, country, state, status, educational qualifications, phone number, mobile number, etc. The fields **marked * are mandatory**.
8. If you belong to the Below Poverty Line (BPL) category, select the option **'Yes'** in the **'Is the applicant below the poverty line?'** field and upload a **BPL card certificate** in the supporting document field.

Request Details :-

Citizenship <i>(Only Indian citizens can file RTI Request application)</i>	Indian
* Is the Applicant Below Poverty Line ?	--Select--



9. Fill in the **RTI question**. It should be **clear and concise**.
10. If you want to to elaborate the question, upload a supporting document.

Note:- Only alphabets A-Z a-z number 0-9 and special characters , . - _ () / @ : & \ % are allowed in Text for RTI Request application.

* Text for RTI Request application	<div style="border: 1px solid #ccc; height: 60px;"></div> 0/3000 Characters entered
Supporting document <i>(only pdf upto 1 MB)</i>	<input type="button" value="Choose File"/> No file chosen

11. Note down your **unique registration number**.
12. **Pay Rs 10** by clicking on the **'Make Payment'** option. BPL Candidates do not have to pay to file an application.
13. **You will get an email and SMS alert on the submission of the application.**

Your RTI Request filed successfully.

Please note down the details of registration.

Registration Number	CABST/R/2014/60078
Name	
Date of Filing	02-04-2014
Request filed with	Cabinet Secretariat
<input type="button" value="Contact Details"/>	
Telephone Number	23018467
Email Id	kj.sibichan@nic.in

After Applying

TRACKING & RESPONSE

How to track an RTI application?

1. Go to <https://rtionline.gov.in>.
2. Click on 'View Status.'
3. Fill in the [form](#).
4. You can use your **mobile number and email address** to check the status.

Online RTI Status Form

Note:Fields marked with * are Mandatory.

* Enter Registration Number	<input type="text"/>	?
* Enter Email Id	<input type="text"/>	
* Enter Security code	<input type="text" value="235096"/>	<input type="text"/>
	<input type="button" value="Submit"/>	<input type="button" value="Reset"/> refresh



How long will it take to get a response to the application?

The concerned PIO must give the requested information within **30 days of submission of application.**⁹

Except, if:

1. The requested information is **about the life or liberty of any person**, then such information must be **given in 48 hours.**¹⁰
2. If the **wrong public authority receives the application**, then the concerned PIO must send the requested information **within additional five days** beyond the prescribed 48 hours or 30 days, depending on the information sought.¹¹
3. If the requested information concerns **third party information**, the concerned PIO must deliver the information within **40 days.**¹²
4. Similarly, if the requested information concerns **allegations of corruption or violation of human rights by intelligence and security organizations**, then the concerned PIO must deliver the information **within 45 days.**¹³

Payment Process

FOR ONLINE APPLICATION

Do applicants Below Poverty Line (BPL) **have to pay?**



Below Poverty Line (BPL) applicants can **file RTI applications free of charge.**¹⁶



They have to upload their **BPL certification** as a supporting document to seek this concession.¹⁷ In all other cases, it is up to the public authorities to determine whether to supply information or not.¹⁸

How do you pay for an RTI online?

Applicants must make a **payment of Rs. 10.**¹⁴ Payment options include internet banking through SBI, using credit/debit card of Master/Visa, or using a RuPay Card.



Online Request Payment Form

Do not use Refresh and back button of browser.

In case amount is debited and registration number is not received, registration number would be sent to you later after reconciliation.

DO NOT REGISTER ANOTHER REQUEST FOR THE SAME INFORMATION

NAME		RTI Fee : ₹10	
Payment Mode	<input type="radio"/> Internet Banking	<input type="radio"/> ATM-cum-Debit Card of SBI	<input type="radio"/> Credit or Debit Card

Pay

Back

Are there any additional fee payments?

Additional fee payment is requested from the applicant when the information must be couriered or for photocopy charges etc.¹⁵ The PIO would **inform the applicant through this portal and by email.**

Online Request Payment Form

Do not use Refresh and back button of browser.

In case amount is debited and registration number is not received, registration number would be sent to you later after reconciliation.

DO NOT REGISTER ANOTHER REQUEST FOR THE SAME INFORMATION

NAME		RTI Additional Fee : ₹100	
Payment Mode	<input type="radio"/> Internet Banking	<input type="radio"/> ATM-cum-Debit Card of SBI	<input type="radio"/> Credit or Debit Card

Pay

Back

Appeal Process

IN CASE OF REJECTION

An RTI application may be **rejected for various reasons, or not answered satisfactorily**. When this happens, the applicant can file an appeal at two levels - **First Appeal and Second Appeal**.

What is an RTI First Appeal?

The applicant files an appeal when they are **not satisfied with the PIO's reply**, or the **PIO rejects the applicant's request** for information. It is an **appeal before a senior officer** of a particular department or ministry, against the decision of PIO.¹⁹

If the applicant does not receive the information **within 30 days**,²⁰ then their application is **assumed to be rejected**.²¹ The concerned **PIO must communicate**:

1. The **reasons** for the rejection,
2. The **time period for an appeal**, and
3. Any **other information** regarding appeals.²²

An appeal must be filed within **30 days of the expiry of the time period** within which information was to be received or when PIO rejects the application.²³ Filing the appeal beyond the 30-day period may be allowed only if there is a **justifiable reason for the delay** in filing of appeal by an applicant.²⁴



What are the **steps to file** an RTI First Appeal Online?

Online RTI First Appeal Form

If request registration no. is available please provide in the box given below.

The screenshot shows a registration form with the following fields and elements:

- Request Registration No.:** A text input field with the placeholder text "Enter Request registration no." and a help icon.
- Enter Email Id:** A text input field with a masked email address "*****".
- Enter Security code:** A CAPTCHA image showing the code "4cbrpj" and a text input field for the code.
- Below the security code field, there is a link: "Can't read the image? click [here](#) to refresh".
- At the bottom of the form are two buttons: "Submit" and "Reset".

1. Go to <https://rtionline.gov.in>.
2. Click on **'Submit First Appeal'**
3. Read the [guidelines](#) for using the **RTI Online Portal**.
4. Click on the checkbox **'I have read and understood the above guidelines'** and then click on the **submit button**.
5. Enter the **registration number, email ID, and security code** and click on the submit button.
6. Select a reason for filing the appeal application from the **'Ground for Appeal'** dropdown field.

The screenshot shows the "Ground For Appeal" dropdown menu with the following options:

- Select--
- Refused access to Information Requested
- No Response Within the Time Limit
- Unreasonable amount of Fee required to Pay
- Provided Incomplete, Misleading or False Information
- Any Other ground

Other visible form elements include:

- A text input field for the appeal text with a note: "Note:- Only alphabets A-Z a-z number 0-9 and special characters are allowed. No special characters are allowed in first appeal application." and a character count of "0/3000 Characters entered".
- A "Supporting document" field with a "Choose File" button and "No file chosen" text.
- A security code field with the code "nb84mz" and a refresh link.

7. Fill in the text in the RTI application **within 3000 characters**.
8. Attach **supporting documents**, if the text is more than 3000 characters.
9. Enter **security code and submit** the application
10. A **unique registration number** is issued for tracking the application.
11. Track applications on the '**View Status**' form by entering mobile number and email address.

Your RTI Appeal filed successfully.

Please note down the details of registration.

Registration Number	DOP&T/A/2014/60103
Name	MANIRAM SHARMA
Date of Filing	02-04-2014
Request filed with	Department of Personnel & Training
Contact Details	
Telephone Number	23094112
Email Id	sorti-dopt@nic.in

Save

Print



The application filed through this web portal would reach electronically to the **PIO of the concerned Ministry/Department**, who will transmit the RTI application electronically to the concerned appellate authority. There is **no additional payment required for the first appeal** of the Right to Information Application.

What is an RTI Second Appeal?

If an applicant is **dissatisfied with the decision in the first appeal**, then such applicant can **file a second appeal** against such decision. The filing of the second appeal must be done **90 days after receiving the rejection of application** or non-receipt of the requested information. It will be filed with either the [Central Information Commission](#) or **the State Information Commission**, depending on the authority approached for information.²⁵

Resources

Contact Information

The Helpline and email address are for queries faced while filing the online RTI through the portal.



011-24622461 (9:00 AM to 5:30 PM,
Monday to Friday except for on
Public Holidays)



helprtionline-dopt@nic.in

Checklists

1. Check whether the **applicant is eligible to file an RTI** depending on their citizenship and residency status.
2. Check whether the information required is **exempt from disclosure for any reason** whatsoever.
3. Check whether the applicant has addressed the RTI application to the **correct public authority**.
4. Check whether the applicant falls under the category of **Below Poverty Line**. If yes, such applicants are **not required to pay** application fees. If not, applicants are required to pay a **fee of Rs. 10** with their application.
5. Check that the applicant adheres to the **timeline for the online first and second appeal**, if made.



Sources of Information

Guideline

User Manual - Online RTI Application - https://rtionline.gov.in/um_citizen.pdf

Legislation

Right to Information Act, 2012

Right to Information Act, 2005

Important Links

RTI Sample Application Form - <https://onlinerti.com/rti-forms/Center.pdf>

RTI FAQs - <https://rtionline.gov.in/faq.php>

First Appeal Portal - <https://rtionline.gov.in/>

Second Appeal Information - <https://cic.gov.in/second-appeal-guidelines>

Glossary

RTI Request - RTI Request is filing the application for the first time. The citizen requests one person (i.e., PIO) to provide information. This means that it involves only the citizen and PIO.

RTI Appeal - RTI Appeal is an appeal before a senior officer against the decision of PIO. This means that a third person (i.e., the Appellate Authority) comes between the applicant and the PIO.

BPL - BPL is a benchmark used by India's government to indicate economic disadvantage and identify individuals and households in need of government assistance and aid. It is determined using various parameters which vary from state to state and within states.

Public Information Officers (PIO) - Public Information Officers (PIO) are responsible for receiving and managing RTI applications. Assistant Public Information Officers (APIO) who are responsible only for accepting applications and passing them on to PIOs.

Central Information Commission - Central Information Commission refers to a body constituted by the Central government consisting of Chief Information Commissioner and a maximum number of ten Central Information Commissioners.²⁶

Public authority - Public authority is a body, institution, or an organization established by the government under the Indian Constitution or any other law or by way of a notification under the Right to Information Act, 2005. Additionally, bodies owned, controlled, or substantially governed by the central government or state governments fall under 'public authorities'. Non-governmental organizations directly or indirectly financed by the government are also public authorities.²⁷

Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) - Overseas Citizens of India (OCI) is a form of permanent residency available to people of Indian origin and their spouses which allows them to live and work in India indefinitely. Despite the name, OCI status is not citizenship and does not grant the right to vote in Indian elections or hold public office.

Non-Resident Indian (NRI) - Non-Resident Indian (NRI) are people of Indian birth, descent or origin who live outside the Republic of India.

Endnotes

- 1 Section 1(2), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 2 Lok Sabha Questions, Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, 3535 accessed at <http://164.100.47.194/Loksabha/Questions/QResult15.aspx?qref=72489&lsno=16>.
- 3 Guide on Right to Information Act, 2005, Government of India Office Memorandum, accessed at [https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20\(DoPT%20Guidelines\).pdf](https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20(DoPT%20Guidelines).pdf)
- 4 Section 8, Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 5 Section 8, Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 6 Section 6, Right to Information Act, 2005; Section 2(h), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 7 Section 5, Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 8 Section 6(1), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 9 Section 7(1), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 10 Section 7(1), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 11 Section 5(2), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 12 Section 11(3), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 13 Section 24(4), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 14 Guide on Right to Information Act, 2005, Government of India Office Memorandum, accessed at [https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20\(DoPT%20Guidelines\).pdf](https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20(DoPT%20Guidelines).pdf)
- 15 Guide on Right to Information Act, 2005, Government of India Office Memorandum, accessed at [https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20\(DoPT%20Guidelines\).pdf](https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20(DoPT%20Guidelines).pdf)
- 16 Section 7(5), RTI Act.
- 17 Guide on Right to Information Act, 2005, Government of India Office Memorandum, accessed at [https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20\(DoPT%20Guidelines\).pdf](https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20(DoPT%20Guidelines).pdf)
- 18 Guide on Right to Information Act, 2005, Government of India Office Memorandum, accessed at [https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20\(DoPT%20Guidelines\).pdf](https://www.iitbbs.ac.in/pdf/RTI-Act%20(DoPT%20Guidelines).pdf)
- 19 Section 19(1), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 20 Section 19(6), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 21 Section 7(2), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 22 Section 7(8), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 23 Section 19(1), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 24 Section 19(1), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 25 Section 19(3), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 26 Section 12(1) & 12(2), Right to Information Act, 2005.
- 27 Section 2(h), Right to Information Act, 2005.

