

P1. Foster Care Legal Assistance System

Problem and Social Impact

The U.S. foster care system involves children separated from their parents with the goal of reunification or placement with long-term caregivers. This system operates under complex constitutional, federal, and state laws, alongside administrative regulations. Professionals in the system are overworked, underpaid, and frequently make errors in addressing important legal questions, which can negatively affect outcomes for children and families. Families also face significant barriers in understanding their rights and navigating the system.

This project seeks to create an AI-powered legal assistance tool to provide accurate, timely, and accessible legal guidance to professionals and families involved in the foster care system. This tool could improve decision-making, reduce errors, and empower families, ultimately leading to better outcomes and increased trust in the system.

Task

Develop an AI-powered legal assistance tool to:

1. Answer complex legal and procedural questions for professionals in the foster care system.
2. Provide plain-language guidance to families about their rights and the process.
3. Ensure accessibility for public use via a web-based or mobile platform.

Data

- Legal Sources:
 - Federal and state statutes related to foster care.
 - Administrative regulations.
 - Constitutional case law impacting child welfare.
- Procedural Guidance:
 - Administrative policies and best practices for caseworkers and judges.
- Public Resources:
 - Educational materials aimed at families in the system.
 - FAQs and resources from child welfare organizations.

Evaluation

1. Stakeholder Feedback:
 - Conduct user testing with foster care professionals, families, and advocacy groups.
 - Gather qualitative and quantitative feedback on usability, accuracy, and clarity.
2. Error Rate Tracking:
 - Measure the frequency of errors in legal answers or guidance provided by the AI.
3. Accessibility Metrics:
 - Evaluate usage rates and accessibility across diverse demographic groups.
4. Impact Analysis:
 - Assess whether the tool reduces delays or errors in foster care cases.

Other Considerations

- Ethical Concerns:
 - Ensure the AI respects privacy and confidentiality.
 - Address bias in training data to avoid inequitable outcomes.

- Technical Feasibility:
 - Use natural language processing (NLP) to understand legal queries and provide tailored answers.
 - Implement explainable AI to clarify how answers are derived.
- Public Accessibility:
 - Develop an intuitive user interface and multilingual support to accommodate a wide range of users.
- Legal Liability:
 - Make clear that the tool provides guidance, not legal advice, to avoid unintended liability.

Who suggested the project

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