



Tenant.AI

Empowering Renters with Personalized Guidance

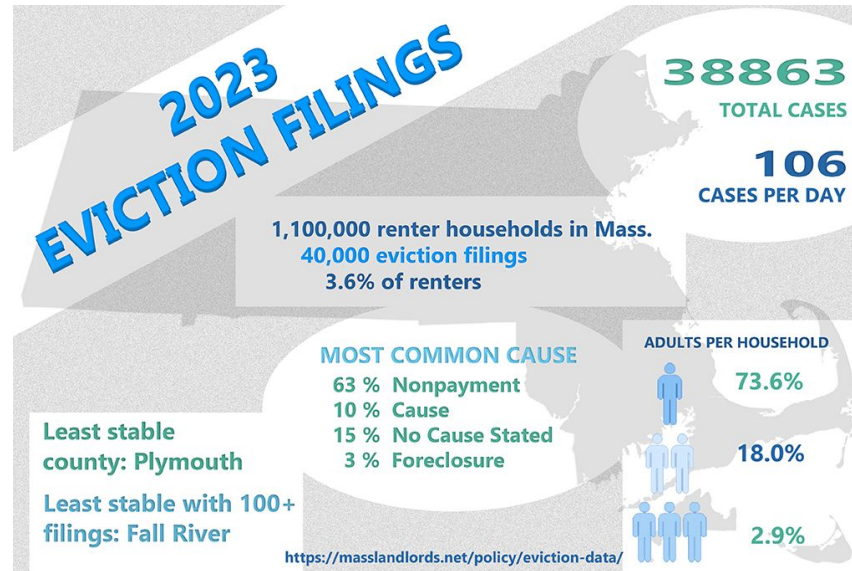
Rushali Mohbe & Nathan Cunningham

The Problem: Tenant Vulnerabilities

Lack of accessible, understandable information about tenant rights.

Complexity of legal processes like security deposit recovery, eviction defense.

Emotional and logistical challenges tenants face during disputes.



Current Challenges:

Case of evictions

Nonpayment is the cause of 70% to 80% of all eviction filings in Massachusetts.

Majority of these cases are either single adults or single head of household.

94% of the levied evictions, are because a renter failed to follow through on a mediated agreement or because they defaulted, meaning they failed to show up at court at a critical juncture.

Given that so few filings represent an actual issue of execution, you can state confidently that if you end up in housing court the likeliest outcome is not that you're going to be evicted. It's that something else is going to happen. You're going to get access to rental subsidy or there's going to be immediate agreement or something like that. You're not going to be forcibly removed.

<https://masslandlords.net/events/eviction-data/>

Renters should show up to court.
They're not as doomed as they think!

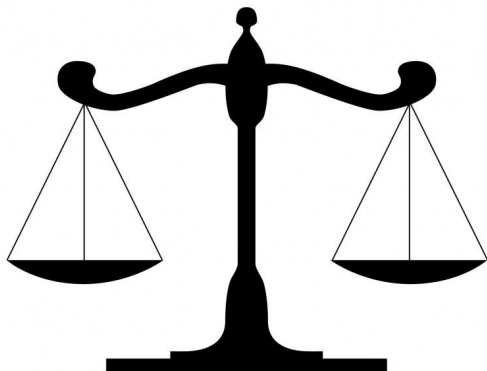


<https://masslandlords.net/policy/eviction-data>

Closing the Justice Gap

In Boston, ninety percent of landlords have lawyers in housing court, and ninety percent of tenants do not.[1]

“Nothing can replace the value brought by a skilled attorney or advocate to civil legal issues affecting basic human needs such as housing, shelter, and family safety. But expanding access to information through the use of technology and self-help centers to meet rising demand must be a part of the solution to closing the gap.” [2]



[1] Martin Frankel et al., The Impact of Legal Counsel on Outcomes for Poor Tenants in New York City's Housing Court: Results of a Randomized Experiment, 35 L. & Soc'y Rev. 419 (2001), <https://legalaidresearch.org/2020/02/11/the-impact-of-legal-counsel-on-outcomes-for-poor-tenants-in-new-york-citys-housing-court-results-of-a-randomized-experiment/>.

[2] <https://mlac.org/closing-the-justice-gap/>

The Need for a Human-Centered Solution

Navigating the complexities of tenancy-related issues, such as understanding rights, recovering security deposits, and defending against eviction, can be a daunting task for many renters.

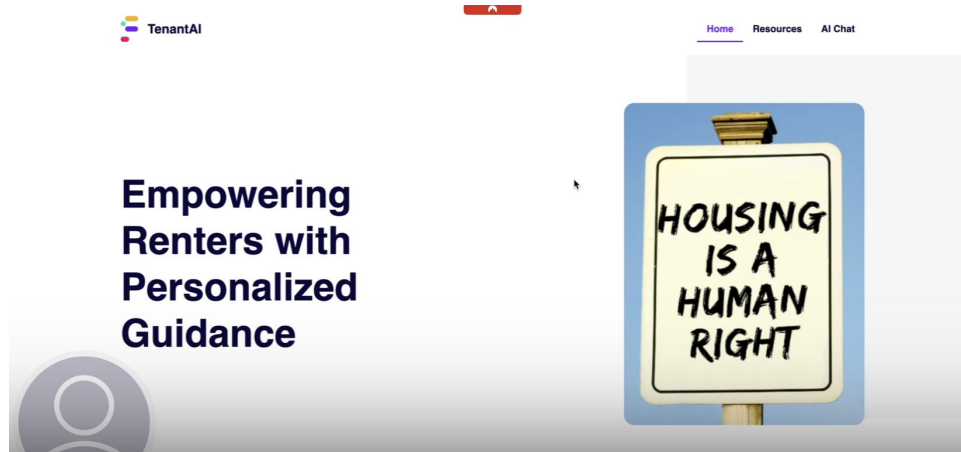
Existing resources are often fragmented, difficult to access, or lack personalization, leaving tenants feeling overwhelmed and unsupported.

Human-Centered AI principles ensure accessibility, transparency, and equity.

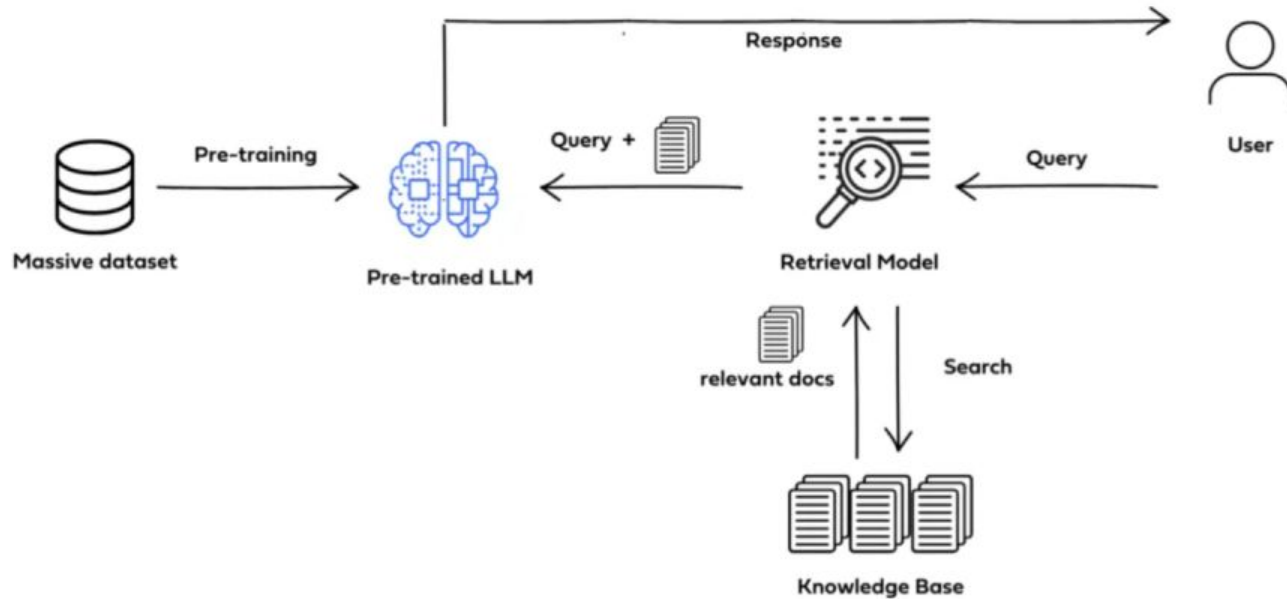
Tenant.AI: Personalized Guidance for Tenants

Key Features:

- Interactive Conversational Interface Powered by an LLM (GPT-4o) Chatbot.
- Knowledge Base Integration: Grounded in authoritative legal resources using Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG)

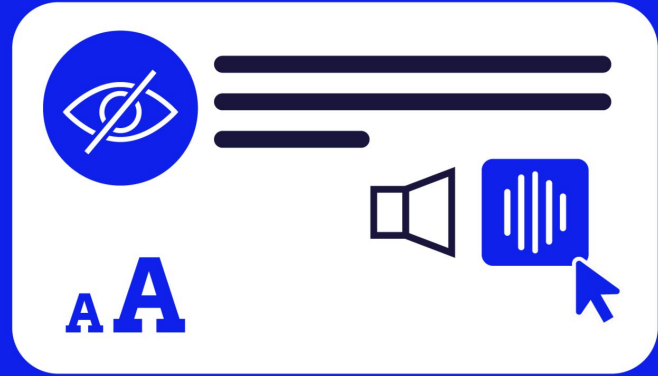


Retrieval **A**ugmented **G**eneration



Accessibility Support

- Screen-reader support
- ARIA labeling of components
- alt-text for images
- High contrast visuals for low-vision users
- 200% functional zoom



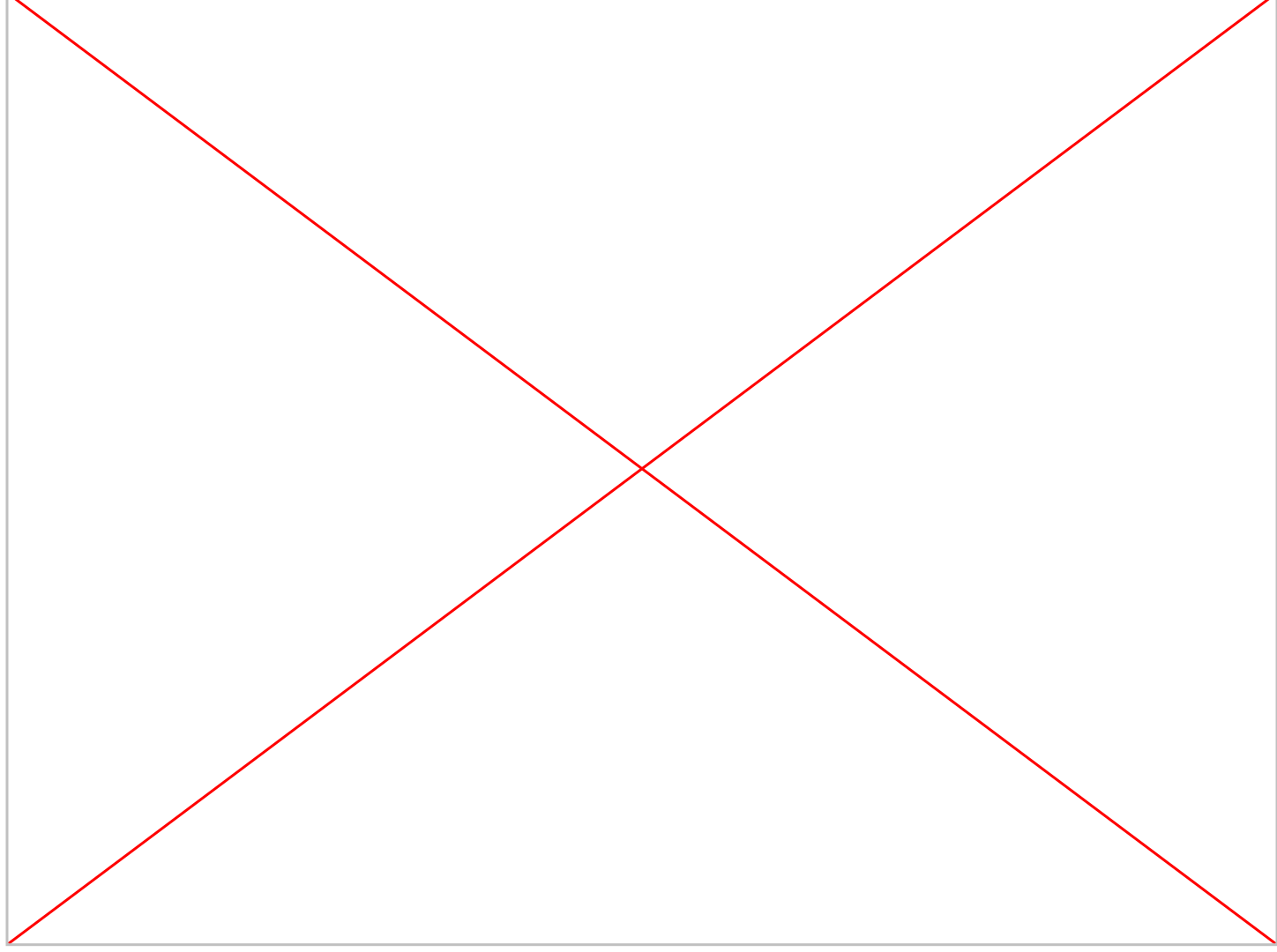
Disclosure

Chatbot can not and does not replace lawyers.

Responses from the chatbot can not be construed as legal advice.



Demo



But did people find this useful?

AI tool was used and reviewed by

- One subject matter expert
- Four young tenants
 - Two first time tenants
 - One non first time tenant
 - One first time tenant in USA

**“Tell us what
you think!”**



Feedback - Subject Matter Expert

“Not all legal jargon is explained. This forces the user to ask the chatbot to define legal terms. Some people may not do that, and they would be at a disadvantage for not having received all the information they require.”



Feedback - Tenant Users

A: First time tenant in USA

"I can't really read the quotes unless I zoom in."

B: First time tenant

"This was cool. Would have been useful when I was moving in."

C: Non first time tenant

"Could this help me draft the response letters?"

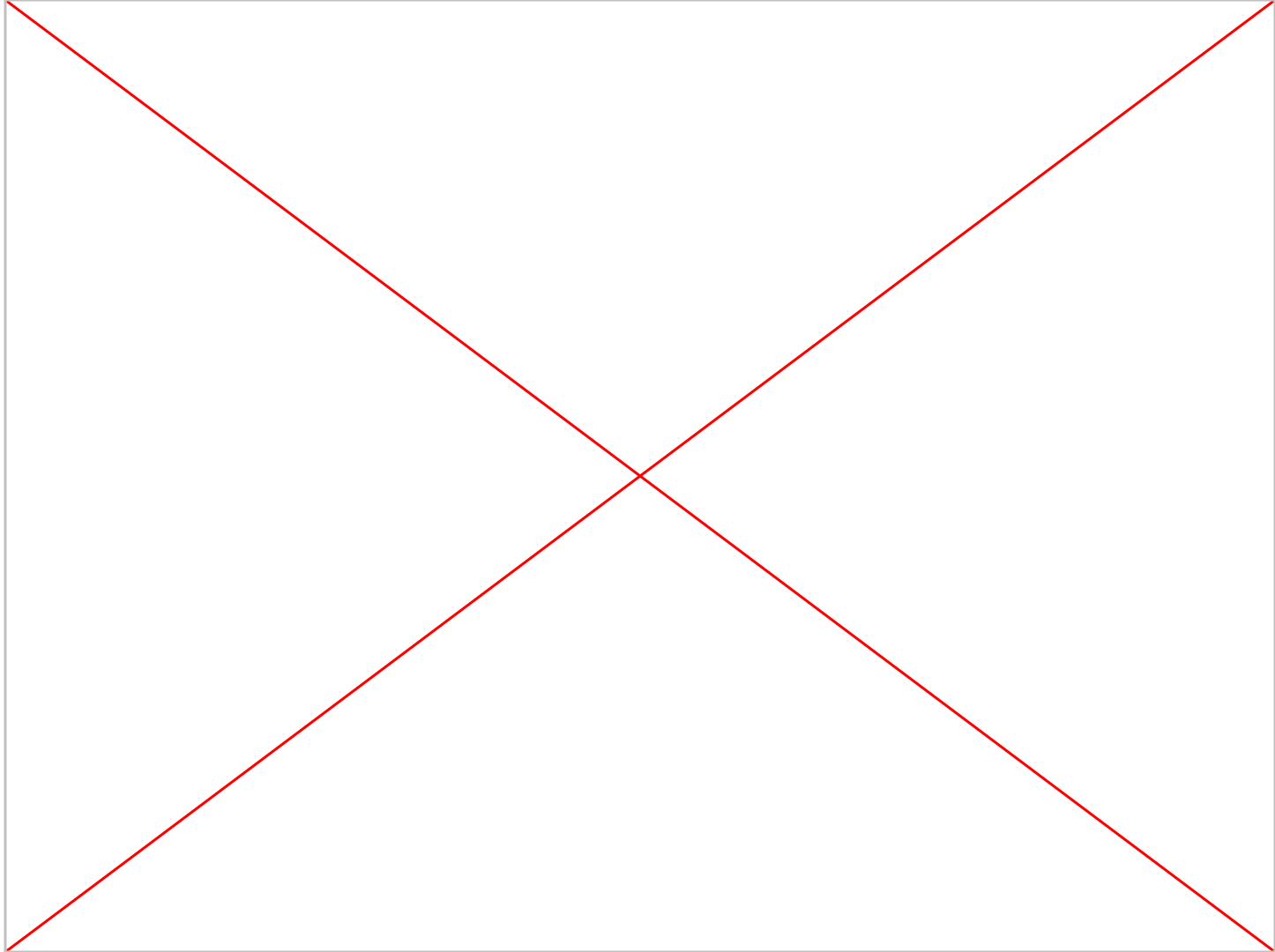
D: First time tenant

"Hopefully I won't need to use this when I ask Adam (landlord) for my security deposit"

Feedback from Tenants using The System Usability Scale

<u>Questions</u>	<u>Avg Score</u>
I think that I would like to use this system frequently.	4
I thought the system was easy to use.	4.25
I would imagine that most people would learn to use this system very quickly.	4
I felt very confident using the system.	3.5
I found the various functions in this system were well integrated.	4.5
I thought there was too much inconsistency in this system.	1.25
I found the system unnecessarily complex.	1.5
I found the system very cumbersome to use.	1.5
I think that I would need the support of a technical person to be able to use this system.	1.75
I needed to learn a lot of things before I could get going with this system.	1.5

New Demo:



How Human-Centered AI Principles Are Embedded

- Transparency: AI chat responses include citations.
- Usability: Simple, intuitive interface; avoids legal jargon.
- Feedback Loops: Allow users to clarify or refine questions.
- Incorporation of User Feedback in chatbot response style and accessibility of web interface.

Impact and Design Implications

Impact:

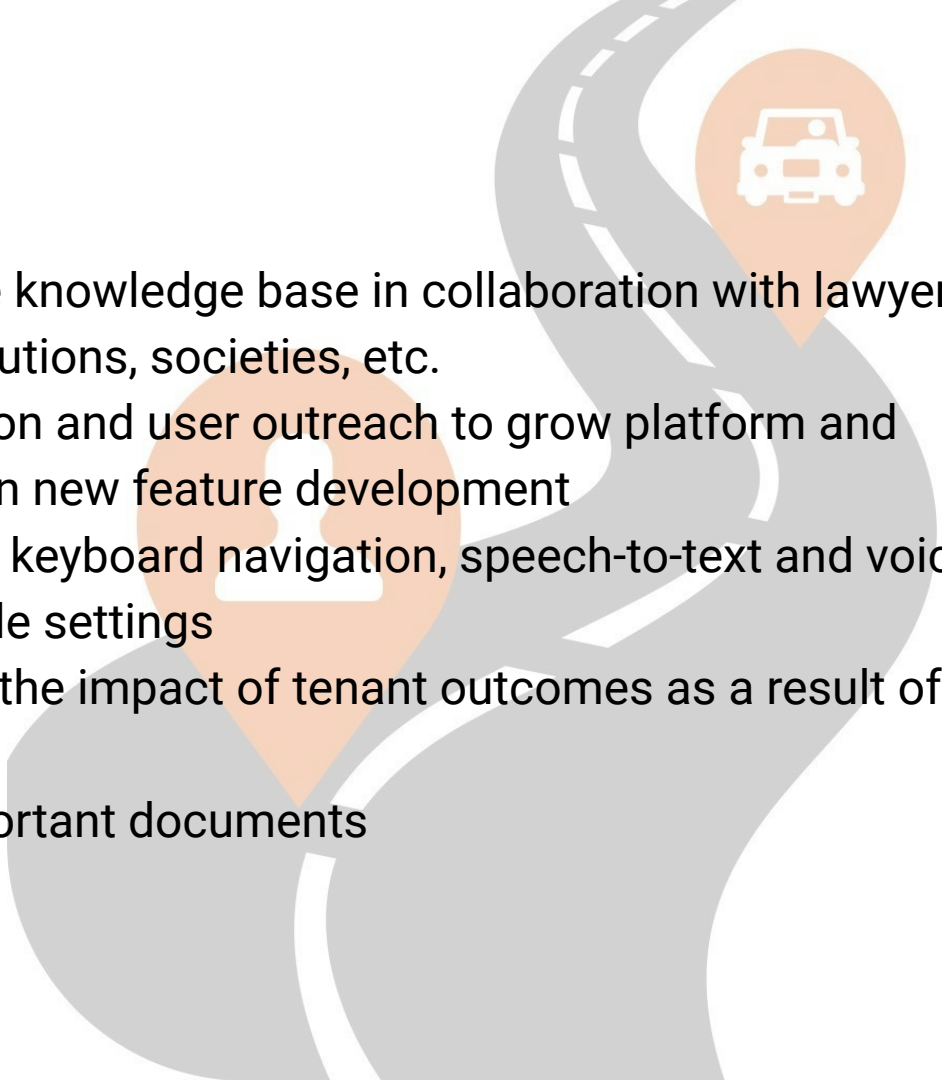
- Increased awareness of rights
- Reduced unlawful evictions
- Empowered tenants.

Design Implications:

- Scalable to other domains (e.g., workers' rights).
- Feedback-driven iterative improvements.

Future Work:

- Continual improvement of the knowledge base in collaboration with lawyers, social workers, legal aid institutions, societies, etc.
- Continued feedback solicitation and user outreach to grow platform and further engage stakeholders in new feature development
- Further accessibility features: keyboard navigation, speech-to-text and voice navigation, personalized profile settings
- Conduct research to quantify the impact of tenant outcomes as a result of access to legal resources
- Metadata file storage for important documents





THANK YOU