

# 2024 InnovAction Winner & Finalists

Congratulations to each of the Finalists and the Winner for their efforts to use innovation to improve access to justice.

## WINNER





### Bay Area Legal Services—

#### *FosterPower*

Designed with youth input at the forefront, Bay Area Legal Services' [FosterPower](#) is the first website and app in the country that explains the benefits, protections, and legal rights of kids in foster care. We created FosterPower because youth in foster care had no way to access information on vital resources and rights they are entitled to in the foster care system. Many don't know they have a right to see their siblings or how to access benefits that can prevent homelessness when they age out of foster care. FosterPower's content was created by attorneys and reviewed by youth. It contains information on critical areas, including medical and mental health, education, independent living benefits, and more. The app also has [30+ short-form videos](#) that feature former foster youth speaking about the law and their own experiences in the system. With over 3,400 downloads since its launch in May 2023, FosterPower is being utilized by youth, attorneys, judges, foster parents, and child welfare professionals throughout Florida. While the content is specific to Florida, the app has quickly gained national interest for expansion to other states.



#### Key Team Members:

			
<b>Taylor Sartor</b> Creator, Co-Founder, and Program Lead	<b>Rastko Durica</b> Co-Founder and Product Lead	<b>David Gray</b> Co-Founder and Business Advisor	<b>Heather Tager</b> Co-Founder and Advisor

## FINALISTS

### [Adalat AI](#)—*Legal Transcription and Translation Software and Taxation Co-Pilot*

Adalat AI is a legal-tech nonprofit that is transforming justice in India by introducing AI in courts. It is currently piloting two products: (1) a speech-to-text transcription and translation software and (2) taxation co-pilot. These innovative solutions address the critical challenge of the immense backlog in the judiciary, characterized by over 50 million pending cases and an average resolution time exceeding a decade.

The transcription and translation software facilitates real-time transcription of court proceedings, significantly diminishing the time required for case documentation and thereby accelerating the judicial process. This technological advancement not only boosts efficiency but also enhances the quality of judicial decision-making by alleviating the administrative burden on judges and enabling attention to case analysis and judgment.

The taxation co-pilot addresses the critical challenge of excessive tax litigation flooding the courts. Currently, tax officers often escalate every lost case to higher courts, despite a low success rate of only 5-10%. This practice stems from a fear of accusations of partiality by anti-corruption agencies if they choose not to appeal. To tackle this issue, our Taxation Co-Pilot leverages predictive analytics to forecast case outcomes, offering informed recommendations on whether to pursue an appeal. This tool aims to provide a clear, objective benchmark, empowering tax officers to make data-driven decisions. By reducing unnecessary appeals, it not only streamlines the legal process but also significantly enhances the revenue efficiency of the tax department.

### [AsyLex Global](#)—*Pathways to Justice: Empowering Refugees Through Accessible Human Rights Mechanisms*

In our six years of experience in online legal advice and representation of asylum seekers in Switzerland, AsyLex has noticed that national courts often insufficiently examine the human rights violations experienced by refugees and consequently wrongly reject them. AsyLex has consequently begun to take these cases to international courts and committees, such as the UN human rights Treaty Bodies. Due to the great success of this project – our success rate is 80% – we have been able to prevent the deportation of these vulnerable asylum seekers.

However, because this problem exists not only in Switzerland but worldwide, scaling up this successful project holds a great opportunity for a much-needed increase in enabling worldwide access to justice at the international level for refugees. Thus, we developed the AsyLex Global project, which aims to promote the use of international human rights mechanisms for refugee protection by empowering local legal advisories to use these mechanisms on behalf of refugees.

We identified South Africa as AsyLex Global's first pilot country. By establishing collaborative partnerships with local South African organizations, we aim to empower local organizations to provide access to justice for refugees up to the international level to challenge human rights violations suffered by refugees.

### [Economic Justice Institute, Inc.](#)—*LIFT (Legal Interventions for Transforming) Wisconsin*

LIFT (Legal Interventions for Transforming) Wisconsin's LegalTuneUp.org tool is transformational in improving access to justice as it democratizes data and tears down the bureaucratic and complicated administrative systems that prevent BIPOC, and low-income communities from thriving. It enables people to access the very data that is used against them by landlords, banks, employers, and educational institutions. LIFT WI transforms systems and increases access to justice by offering a multi-level service to solve the justice crisis and ensure that lawyers can focus on complicated legal issues. It is an original proof of concept that will be scalable across the country.

At LegalTuneUp.org an individual can address a driver's license suspension based on unpaid fines and fees, clear a criminal or housing eviction record, answer a consumer debt action and take the steps needed to modify child support. LegalTuneUp is currently the only tool of its kind in the country that partners and integrates multiple state government agencies. It can have a transformative impact on how someone's public data is accessed, used and by whom and lift a burden faced by many families. One's access to justice should not be contingent on whether they can afford it.

### [Free Law Project](#)—*@recap.email*

Because of high PACER (Public Access to Court Electronic Records) fees, researchers, journalists, and individuals do not have access to legal information the way they should. Attorneys helping indigent clients have difficulty accessing case materials, investigative reports fail to launch or are hamstrung by bad data, and the public struggles to access the real information in the courts.

For over a decade, the [RECAP Extensions](#) have liberated documents from behind the massive paywall of the federal PACER system. One by one, our users have sent us millions of documents, which we have built into one of the [largest open databases of court filings in the world](#).

While this system works well, sometimes it doesn't feel like enough. Lawyers and litigants get notification emails from PACER that contain links to download PACER documents for free — a rare exception to the paywall. Free Law Project developed @recap.email to have new filings in these cases be automatically added and available to the public.

Over time, as more people use @recap.email, it makes the case to Congress and the judicial branch that these documents should be public and that, given a choice, people believe in the importance of court transparency.

## [Giving Connection Inc.](#)—*Nonprofit Search Platform – Geolocation Expansion*

Dockets were filled with hundreds of clients all seeking our most basic needs - from food to housing to healthcare to mental health treatment to recovery services. The endless stream of trauma, volume of requests alongside a lack of precious time proves emotionally exhausting. With over 1.8 million nonprofits and nearly 38 million people in poverty in the US, there is an enormous gap in the market for tools to meaningfully connect people with resources within reach.

Giving Connection is a two-sided marketplace that connects people with nonprofits using a search tool that harnesses the power of local communities and puts people first. Our interactive map operates similar to how you might find a restaurant in your neighborhood. We make it simple to filter by keywords, location, causes, and services to discover the right nonprofit meeting your needs. We all experience hardship. Finding help shouldn't be.

We are currently launched in Nashville with 50% of local nonprofits on our platform. We are seeking \$10,000 in grants and major gifts to help us spread awareness, increase our impact, and scale to new geographic areas.

## [Justice Technology Association/Justice Technology Foundation](#)

In the US, 92% of people with civil legal problems did not receive any or enough legal assistance in 2022, up from 86% in 2017. Technology can and should be part of the solution to democratize justice. A rapidly growing number of entrepreneurs aim to address this crisis with ethical technology known as justice tech to help people access their rights and meaningfully better their lives.

Our founding members saw a significant gap: despite explosive growth and overwhelming need, no recognized authority existed to support these new solutions, scale their positive impact, or stand for public benefit.

In less than two years, JTA has become the authoritative voice in support of consumer-centric technology to help close the justice gap. We are a powerful nexus for the sector, bringing together disparate voices to work together in pursuit of technology for the public good. We connect the public with justice tech companies to provide affordable, ethical options for navigating their legal problems.

## [Kansas Holistic Defenders](#)—*JusticeText: AI-Powered Platform for Police Accountability*

In a criminal justice system with deeply entrenched racial and class disparities, video evidence has proven to be a powerful vehicle for preventing wrongful convictions and promoting greater police accountability. However, public defenders – the systematically underfunded attorneys that ensure all people have access to a fair trial – are struggling to review this volume of data, with serious implications for the clients they support.

In 2022, Kansas Holistic Defenders, an innovative and comprehensive nonprofit public defense agency based in Douglas County, Kansas, launched a pilot with JusticeText to help streamline the review of digital discovery with an AI-powered platform. JusticeText's automated transcripts have helped the team find critical moments buried deep in body cam and dash cam videos that prove their client's innocence. By more efficiently finding the moments that matter, Kansas Holistic Defenders has been able to more aggressively pursue cases while creating more space to provide holistic wraparound support for each client they serve.

### [Legal Link](#)—*Legal First Aid on the Frontlines: Increasing Access to Justice with Community Navigators*

Maria had been a caseworker for years, but when clients raised legal issues, she froze. That changed after she received training from Legal Link. One of her clients was facing over \$70,000 in child support debt. Thanks to her training, Maria knew that this debt should not have accrued while the client was incarcerated, and worked to clear nearly all of the debt. As a result, her client got his driver's license reinstated and obtained employment.

Laws like the one above can be incredibly impactful, but for the majority of people experiencing poverty, these legal protections are out of reach. The Access to Justice gap is profound: the U.S. has more lawyers per capita than any other country, yet 92% of low-income families do not get adequate help for their civil legal problems.

Legal Link is training a new frontline of community justice workers to fill this gap. With poverty reduction as our goal, we strive to make the law transparent and accessible, while empowering low-income communities to know and access legal protections. Using our unique Legal First Aid curriculum and web-based tools, we are scaling nationally to shift where and how people access legal information.

### [The Center for Computer Assisted Legal Instruction](#)—*A2J Author Team*

A2J Author was the first low code, document automation tool that allowed lawyers, law students, and other legal professionals to automate court forms for self-represented litigants. There are over 1,000 of these A2J Guided Interviews ranging in topics from divorce to protective orders to name changes. Since 2005, 8 million people have completed their legal forms using A2J Author in 44 states and 4 countries. A2J Guided Interviews now help 600,000 people a year to learn about their legal rights, determine appropriate next legal steps, and complete the necessary forms. The interface is maximized for mobile, meets high accessibility standards, is available online 24/7, and removes many of the barriers to accessing justice self-represented litigants face. Many code changes were added in July 2022 that improve accessibility (WCAG 2.0 AA standard), add additional languages to our hosting site (a2j.org – English, Spanish, and Vietnamese), and improve the form automation process. A2J Author is open source and provided free of charge for anyone automating forms for self-represented litigants by CALL, the Center for Computer-Assisted Legal Instruction.