Amplify 2026

November 2-5 Scottsdale, AZ

LegalVIEW® Insights: Beyond Rates – Trends Shaping the Business of Law



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ELM Solutions

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Introducing the 2026 Q4 LegalVIEW Insights report

Three data sets, read together, reveal the real cost of outside counsel delivery

1

RATES

What legal talent costs

Pinpoint where pricing pressure is building across industry, Am Law tier and practice area

2

STAFFING

Who performs the work

See how partner, associate and paralegal leverage changes the blended cost of delivery

3

COMPLIANCE

Whether delivery meets expectations

Identify recurring gaps in staffing, documentation, timing and billing behavior

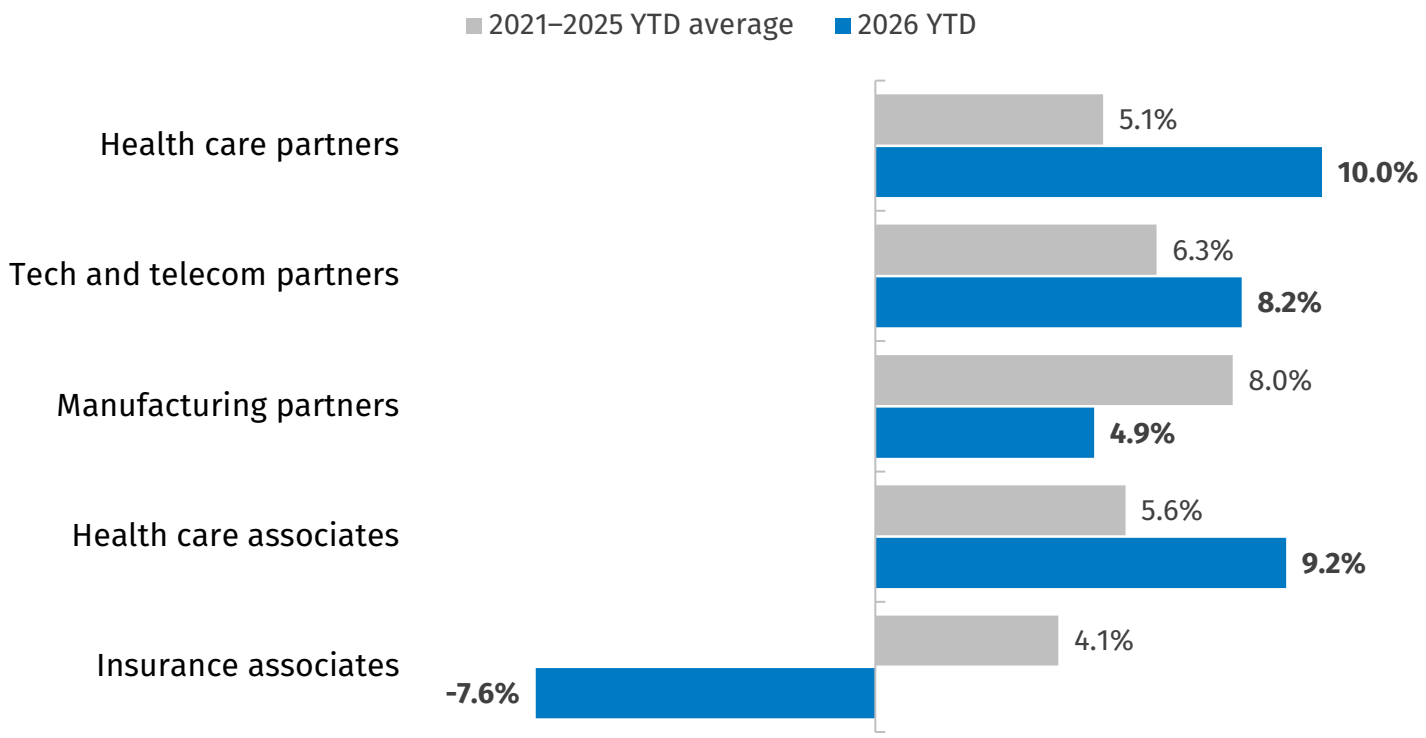
READ THE FULL REPORT

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The value is not any one metric. It is seeing where the signals reinforce or contradict one another.

Industry pressure is concentrated, not uniform

2026 YTD rate change compared with the 2021–2025 YTD average



+4.9 pp

Health care partners

10.0% vs 5.1%

+3.6 pp

Health care associates

9.2% vs 5.6%

−11.7 pp

Insurance associates

−7.6% vs 4.1%

−3.1 pp

Manufacturing partners

4.9% vs 8.0%

Health care and tech are above trend for partners and associates alike.

Am Law tiers are moving in opposite directions

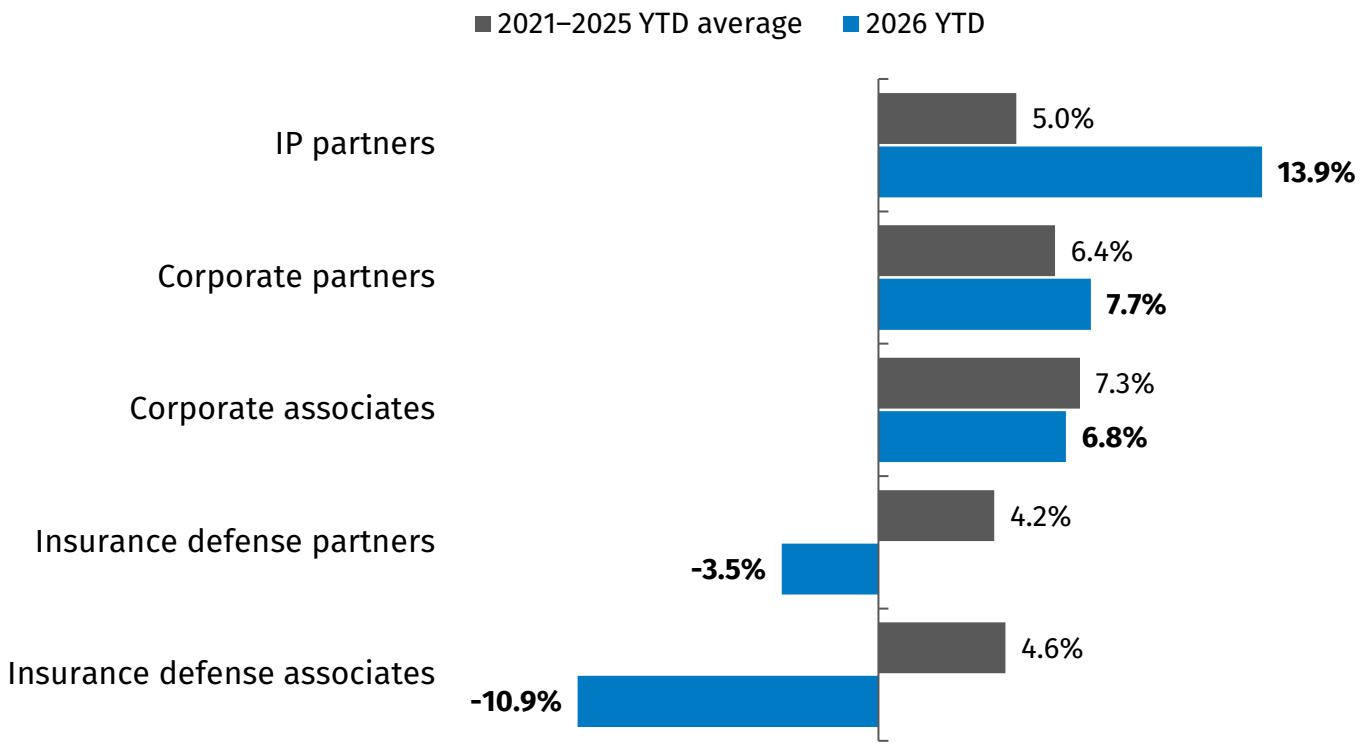
Partner and associate 2026 YTD rate change versus the 2021–2025 YTD average

	PARTNERS			ASSOCIATES		
Am Law tier	**2021–25 avg**	**2026 YTD**	**Change**	**2021–25 avg**	**2026 YTD**	**Change**
Am Law 1–25	6.9%	**8.0%**	▲ **+1.1 pp**	6.5%	**6.8%**	▲ **+0.3 pp**
Am Law 26–50	5.3%	**9.1%**	▲ **+3.8 pp**	6.3%	**8.8%**	▲ **+2.5 pp**
Am Law 51–100	5.0%	**5.2%**	▲ **+0.2 pp**	6.8%	**4.7%**	▼ **−2.1 pp**
Am Law 101–150	3.7%	**1.2%**	▼ **−2.5 pp**	4.6%	**0.4%**	▼ **−4.2 pp**
Am Law 151–200	4.7%	**−0.9%**	▼ **−5.6 pp**	4.2%	**−3.9%**	▼ **−8.1 pp**

Am Law 26–50 leads acceleration; Am Law 101–200 is cooling sharply.

Practice area may matter more than firm pedigree

The widest 2026 dispersion appears in specialist work



13.9% vs 5.0% history

IP partner growth is nearly 3× its YTD history

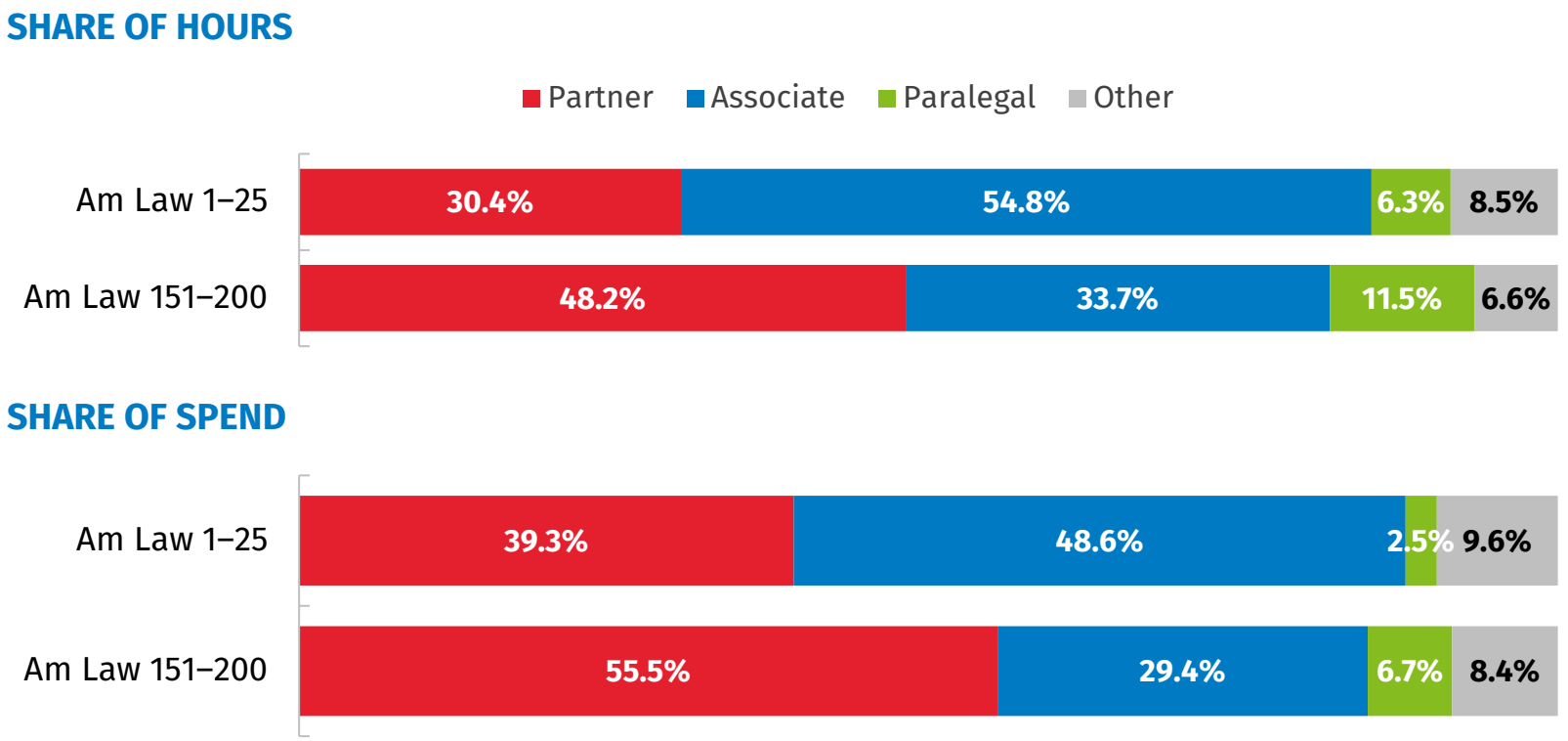
−10.9% vs 4.6% history

Insurance defense associates show the steepest reversal

Premium expertise is setting the price in IP while insurance defense is moving the other way.

Lower-tier firms can be more partner dependent

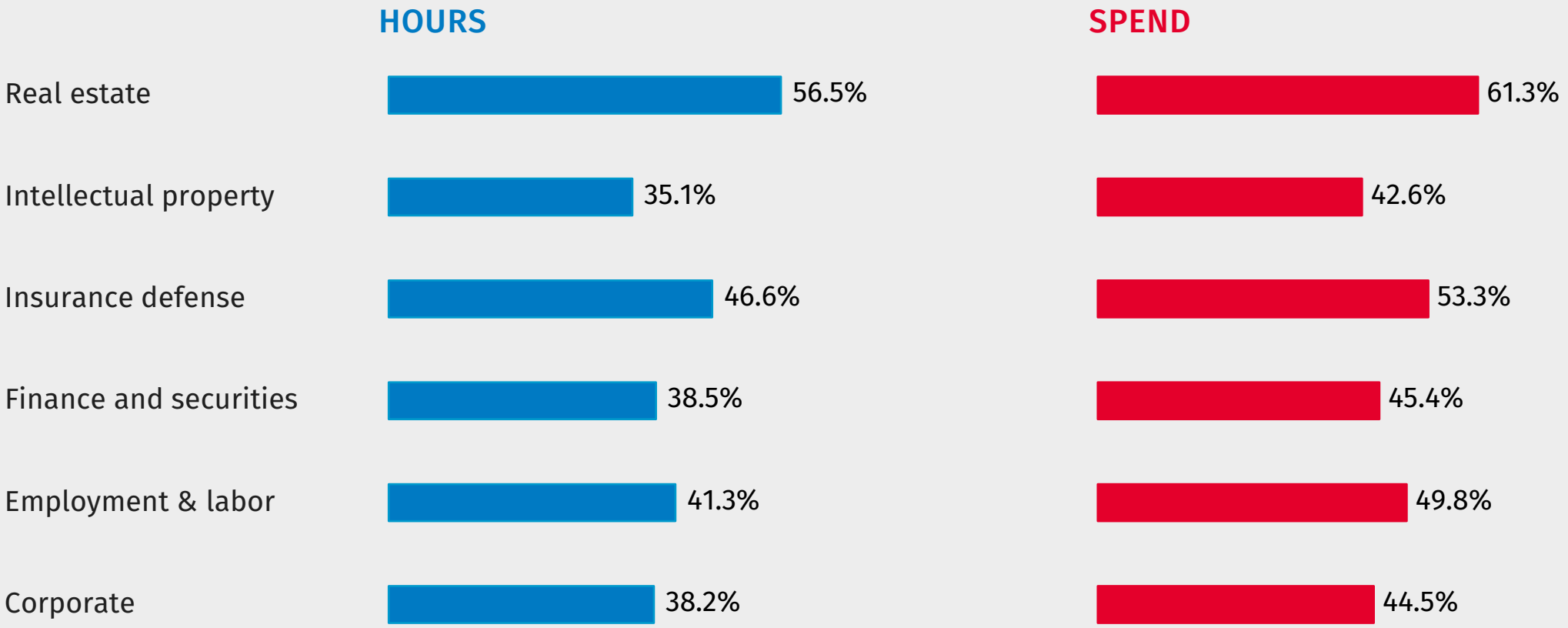
Rolling 12 months, July 2025–June 2026



Partners: 30.4% of hours at Am Law 1–25 vs 48.2% at Am Law 151–200

The delivery model also changes by practice

Partner share of hours and spend, rolling 12 months



Real estate is the most partner-heavy practice: 56.5% of hours and 61.3% of spend.

Non-compliance is rising across most Am Law tiers

Average net dollars per reviewed line, 2026 YTD

Am Law 1–25

32.3% ▲ +2.2 pp

Am Law 26–50

38.4% ▲ +6.1 pp

Am Law 51–100

35.4% ▲ +0.3 pp

Am Law 101–150

33.8% ▲ +3.8 pp

Am Law 151–200

35.2% ▲ +7.1 pp

All other firms

26.1% ▼ −1.9 pp

Five of six Am Law segments are at or above trend!

Different segments fail in different ways

Leading 2026 YTD non-compliance reasons and change in mix since 2023

AM LAW 1–25

38.0%

Vague detail

+27.2 pp

AM LAW 26–50

27.5%

Staffing

+11.9 pp

AM LAW 101–150

24.3%

Late billing

+15.8 pp

INSURANCE

41.5%

Admin work

+2.6 pp

Corporate	**28.1% non-compliance**	Vague detail is 23.7% of reasons
Insurance	**26.4% non-compliance**	Admin work is 41.5% of reasons

Use the recurring pattern to decide where to intervene

Use financial impact to prioritize compliance efforts

Average net dollars per reviewed line, 2026 YTD

Am Law 1–25

$61 Vague detail: **$94**

Am Law 26–50

$36 Late billing: **$61**

Am Law 51–100

$16 Vague detail: **$18**

Am Law 101–150

$16 Staffing: **$23**

Am Law 151–200

$15 Staffing: **$19**

All other firms

$4 Admin work: **$6**

At Am Law 1–25, vague detail averages $94 per reviewed line

When the signals stack up: Am Law 26–50

One segment illustrates why connected data changes the conversation

RATE PRESSURE	**9.1% partner | 8.8% associate**	+3.8 pp and +2.5 pp vs YTD history
COMPLIANCE PRESSURE	**38.4% non-compliant lines**	+6.1 pp vs 32.3% YTD history
STAFFING SIGNAL	**27.5% of non-compliance**	Staffing mix is up 11.9 pp since 2023
FINANCIAL OPPORTUNITY	**$36 average per reviewed line**	Late billing averages $61 per reviewed line

Rate growth is only one part of the pressure. Delivery and compliance may amplify it.

Turn the data into a better firm conversation

Three practical actions for legal operations

1

Benchmark in context

Match firm tier, industry, practice, matter type and time period

2

Negotiate the delivery model

Document expected partner, associate and paralegal roles alongside rates

3

Build a connected scorecard

Combine rate movement, staffing mix, compliance patterns and financial opportunity

Are you negotiating a rate or managing the full cost of legal service delivery?