

## 2026 Litigation Support Trends Revealed: What's Next for Legal Teams

Based on U.S. Legal Support's 2025 survey of 2,011 legal professionals, 2026 is shaping up to be the year of targeted tech investment, tightened vendor rosters, and practical AI adoption—all with security baked in. Think measured modernization, not shiny-object syndrome.



### WHO WE HEARD FROM

A broad cross-section of the legal industry weighed in—predominantly from single-market/regional firms—with strong representation from legal assistants and paralegals.



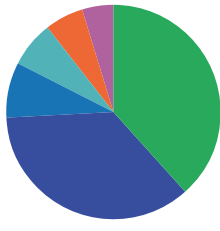
TOTAL RESPONDENTS **2,011**

#### FIRM TYPES:



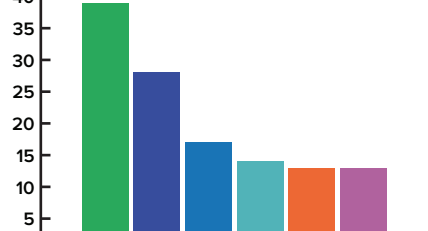
- 72%** Single-market/regional firms
- 17%** AmLaw 100 firms
- 7%** Other
- 4%** Fortune 1000 organizations

#### ROLES:



- 33%** Legal Assistant
- 31%** Paralegal
- 7%** Attorney
- 6%** Associate Attorney
- 5%** Partner
- 4%** Managing/Senior Partner

#### TOP PRACTICE AREAS:

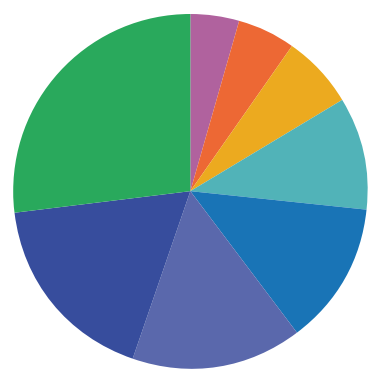


- 39%** Personal Injury
- 28%** Insurance
- 17%** Medical Malpractice
- 14%** Labor & Employment
- 13%** Construction
- 13%** Contracts

### FEWER VENDORS, FASTER MOVES

The post-pandemic “more vendors, more coverage” mindset has cooled. Firms are curating **small, reliable rosters**—usually 2–4 vendors per category—to reduce costs and risks while improving efficiency.

#### COMMON OUTSOURCED SERVICES



- 84%** Court Reporting
- 55%** Interpreting/Translation
- 48%** Record Retrieval
- 40%** Transcription
- 32%** Trial graphics/exhibits
- 20%** Trial presentation tech
- 17%** Jury research/consulting
- 13%** eDiscovery

#### VENDOR SELECTION CRITERIA:

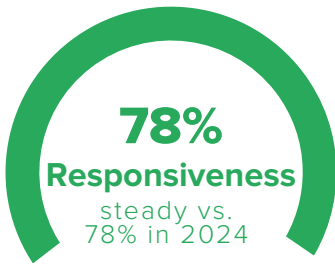
- 78%** Response & delivery speed
- 70%** Fair prices
- 54%** Resource availability

**COST CONTROL APPROACH**  
**54%** say they “use a limited number of vendors”

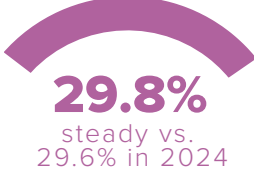
### RESPONSIVENESS STILL RULES—SECURITY GATES THE DOOR

When it comes to working with litigation support partners, speed, responsiveness, and security are key.

#### TOP VENDOR SELECTION FACTOR:



#### SECURITY AS A GENERAL SELECTION FACTOR:



#### DUE-DILIGENCE MUST-HAVES

(top three priorities when vetting tech vendors)

- 1** Data privacy policies **70%**
- 2** HIPAA compliance **51%**
- 3** End-to-end encryption **46%**

### OUTLOOK ON OUTSOURCED LITIGATION SUPPORT SERVICE BUDGETS

Spending isn't ballooning—it's **targeted**. Investments are flowing into tech-enabled services that deliver measurable returns.

#### SPENDING EXPECTATIONS:



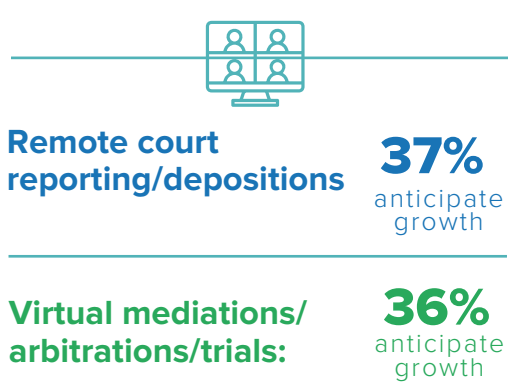
#### WHERE SPEND IS GROWING:

- Remote proceedings & eDiscovery
- AI-driven tools with proven impact

### THE FUTURE IS FLEXIBLE: REMOTE AND HYBRID WORK ARE HERE TO STAY

The hybrid model sticks. Teams expect more remote activity across the board.

#### EXPECTED INCREASES IN 2026:

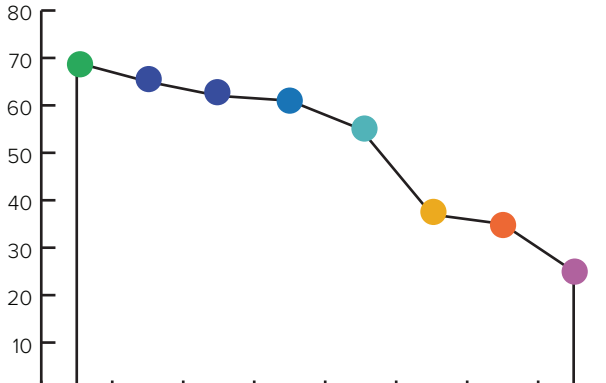


### INTEGRATED SYSTEMS TAKE CENTER STAGE

2026 is about stitching tools together—reducing silos between discovery, deposition, and trial.

#### CURRENT LEGAL TECH USAGE:

- 69%** Legal research
- 65%** Billing
- 62%** eSignatures
- 61%** Timekeeping



- 55%** Records management
- 37%** eDiscovery
- 35%** Document review
- 25%** Practice management

### BEYOND EMAIL: DATA EVERYWHERE

Non-traditional data—messaging apps, mobile, biometrics, cloud files, social media—now shows up in most matters, raising the stakes for smarter, AI-enabled eDiscovery.

**37%** of respondents currently utilize eDiscovery tools in their workflow

#### WHAT WILL SHAPE THE NEXT 5 YEARS:

**40%**

say **advanced eDiscovery** tools will have the biggest impact on litigation, and a **majority also point to increased use of AI** as highly impactful. These aren't competing views—respondents expect **AI inside eDiscovery platforms** (e.g., classification, deduping, pattern detection) to drive that impact.

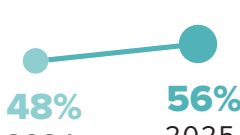
**85%** encounter non-traditional data during discovery

### PRACTICAL AI COMES INTO FOCUS

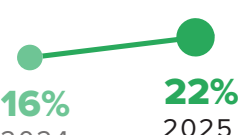
Firms increasingly view AI as a competitive necessity. 2026 is the year to formalize policies, training, and workflows.

- Expect more AI over next 5 years: **77%**
- AI/ML among top 3 tech priorities into 2026: **26%**
- Expect firm's AI use to increase in 2026: **43%**

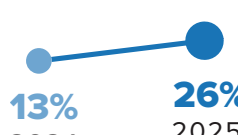
Firms **agree**: AI will be mainstream in law in 3-5 years



Firms **strongly agree**: AI will be mainstream in law in 3-5 years



Firms prioritizing AI/ML integration next year:



### 2026 = AI MATURITY + MEASURED MODERNIZATION

#### THE THEME IS OPTIMIZATION:

connect systems, invest where ROI is clear, keep vendor lists tight, and make AI useful (and safe) in daily workflows.

- CONNECT**
- SECURE**
- OPTIMIZE**
- PROVE ROI**

### STAY AHEAD WITH U.S. LEGAL SUPPORT

U.S. Legal Support delivers **responsive, secure, and future-ready** litigation support services for 2026 and beyond—connecting you with **5,000+** professional court reporters for in-person, remote, and hybrid proceedings. We also provide process serving, record retrieval, **AI-powered medical records summarization and transcript summaries**, interpreting and translations, plus litigation consulting and trial support services. Reach out to discuss your firm's needs.



Have questions about the data or want to know more?  
We'd love to hear your perspective and predictions on litigation support trends.

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