

Fairfax Associates reports 58 law firm mergers through Q3 2026, slightly below 2025 pace

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 1, 2026 – Fairfax Associates tracked 12 completed law firm mergers in the third quarter of 2026, bringing the year-to-date total to 58, approximately 5% below the 61 mergers completed through the first three quarters of 2025. Completed mergers are those with effective dates during Q3 2026.

The quarter was notable for the July 1 launch of Hogan Lovells Cadwalader, which the firms describe as the largest law firm merger in history. This merger, a combination of Hogan Lovells (2,700 lawyers) and Cadwalader, Wickersham & Taft (430 lawyers) was first announced in 2025 but effective July 1. The next largest merger of the quarter saw Kansas City-based Spencer Fane (583) combine with Tulsa-based Conner & Winters (78).

The quarter also saw one cross-border merger via the creation of SDV Fenchurch, a Swiss Verein formed from Connecticut-based Saxe Doernberger & Vita (47) and three European firms – Fenchurch Law (London), Weslowski Abogados (Madrid), and CLIR Fenchurch (Paris) – contributing an additional 43 lawyers.

Two additional midsize mergers involved firms from different geographic regions within the U.S. Pittsford, NY-based Harris Beach Murtha (261) combined with Boston-based Peabody & Arnold (40), and Milwaukee-based Michael Best & Friedrich entered the New York market through its combination with 40-lawyer Kane Kessler. Small-firm consolidation remained prevalent: six of the 11 completed mergers involved target firms with fewer than 10 lawyers. This group included Atlanta-based Smith Gambrell & Russell (338) with Los Angeles-based Turner Dhillon (5), New York firms McLaughlin & Stern (107) and Kent, Beatty & Gordon (6), and Birmingham-based Balch & Bingham (218) with Birmingham-based Compton Jones Drescher (6).

Two mergers announced in Q3 are set to become effective in Q4: Phoenix-based Fennemore Craig (371) with Gallagher & Kennedy (53), and Bangor-based Rudman Winchell (24) with Gross, Minsky & Mogul (8). A third Q3-announced combination, Kansas City-based Lathrop GPM (311) with New York-based HG Law (55), is scheduled to become effective in Q1 2027.

Looking ahead, Fairfax expects merger activity to remain active as firms continue to pursue combinations that strengthen strategic practices, expand geographic reach, and build greater scale in an increasingly competitive market.

Fairfax Associates collects data from published reports, press releases, and direct reports from law firms. Mergers are reported where the acquired firm has five or more lawyers. Upon routine verification of the data, some historical numbers may have been updated since previously issued reports, and the number of mergers contained herein may change as additional mergers are announced.

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