



Frontier Distributor designation

The Microsoft standard for modern, value-added distribution

November 2025





Distinguish yourself with a Frontier Distributor designation

What it is

A Solutions Partner designation that recognizes Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) distributors that have world-class distribution capabilities across cloud, AI, and security. This designation defines the standard for modern, value-added distribution.

Why it matters

This designation helps indirect resellers identify trusted distributors with platforms and services that accelerate growth and customer outcomes. It also drives reseller preference and standardizes support, reducing rework and escalations.

If you attain the designation, you'll receive powerful benefits built for your business, as well as a distinct badge to display in marketplace listings, marketing, and partner outreach.



Spotlighting distributors who serve as trusted advisors

In the past, CSP distributors have often supported indirect resellers through a transactional approach, heavily driven by price. Today, distributors go **beyond the transaction** to serve as trusted advisors to their resellers, with capabilities like:

- **Premium services:** Digital platforms, shared services, and more to drive higher adoption, cross-sell, and renewal rates.
- **Faster deal velocity:** Skilling at scale and repeatable deployment motions to remove friction for resellers.
- **Lower cost to serve:** Standardized support to reduce rework and escalations.
- **Proof that travels:** Validated partner capabilities to build reseller trust and highlight consistency, compliance, and customer success.

The Frontier Distributor designation **recognizes partners who excel as trusted advisors** for their resellers.



Concrete benefits that accelerate growth

The Frontier Distributor designation equips you with powerful benefits to stand out in the marketplace.

- **Enhanced visibility:** Resellers can identify your organization via clear badging, which can improve discovery and win rates
- **Product licenses:** Up to 200 users across 42 Microsoft software products (for internal use) to power demos, labs, and readiness¹
- **Azure credits:** \$24,000² for internal development and proofs of concept that accelerate solution innovation¹
- **Presales and support services:**
 - EA to Cloud Solution Provider (CSP) transfer tool access
 - Technical presales and deployment services¹
 - Technical support and consultation (hours vary by partner benefits package)¹
 - Support plan discounts to lower cost-to-serve
- **Incentives:** Migration project funding and other activity-based investments to expand pipeline and enhance your sales cycle. Reference the [incentives guide](#) for more detail

1. Benefits not provisioned until designation enrollment is available in Partner Center.

2. Throughout this deck, \$ refers to US dollar (USD).

Explore designation qualifications

To qualify, you must have an active CSP distributor authorization and meet requirements across six categories. Explore the Frontier Distributor designation qualifications below.

Criteria category	Areas of measurement
1. GTM/sales capabilities across Microsoft Cloud	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Reach (count of resellers who are transacting with customers)Frequency (average customers per reseller)Yield (average revenue per customer)Gross customer add reach (count of resellers who added new customers)Gross customer add frequency (average new customers per reseller)
2. Operational readiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Distributor technical certifications, new certifications per reseller over the trailing 12 months (TTM), reseller designation and specialization attainment, and reseller 25-point partner capability score attainment
3. Platform ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Automated platform with modern transaction, analytics, enablement, and technical capabilitiesIntegration with Partner Center and Microsoft Marketplace
4. Security ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Ability to drive incident management lifecycle, comprehensive ecosystem security strategy (including data and subcontractors), and industry compliance status
5. Support ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Achieves expected incident rates, CSAT, and performance metrics (Solutions Partner designation for Support Services is required and can be attained separately or as part of the Frontier Distributor designation assessment)
6. Reseller enablement ³	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Practice builders, centers of excellence, skilling services and resources, go-to-market (GTM) resources, recruiting and onboarding, channel insights and analytics, platform capabilities, and technical delivery capabilities

3. Criteria will also be assessed by third party auditor vs. telemetry.

Measuring success: Distributor capability score

Explore distributor capability score requirements

Quantitative prerequisites

- **Distributor capability score:** Partners must meet thresholds for **33 of 37 metrics** to qualify. Metrics are shown in the table.
- The six metrics marked with ‡ are required.

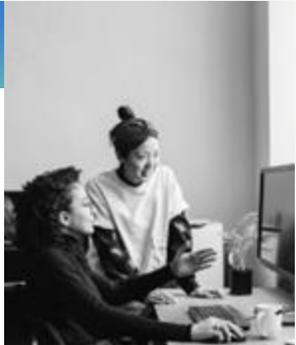
Definitions

- All reach, frequency, yield, and reseller certification metrics are measured over the TTM; all others are snapshots.
- For reach, Global Customer Add (GCA) reach, and active certifications (distributor), partners must meet the threshold multiplied by their number of CSP-authorized regions.
- AI Business Process is measured by Business Central workload performance only. Security GCA reach and Security GCA frequency are measured by Microsoft 365 E5 and mini-bundle performance only.
- Resellers are only included in the solution areas where they are transacting.
- Eligible certifications for active certifications (distributor) and new certifications/reseller include any certification eligible for Solutions Partner designations for [Business Applications](#), [Modern Work](#), [Azure](#), and [Security](#).

	Cloud & AI Platforms	AI Business Solutions		Security
		AI Business Process	AI Workforce	
Reach	230	600		275
Frequency	3	13		4
Yield	\$8,000	\$2,000		\$1,750
GCA reach	175 ‡	12	400 ‡	28 ‡
GCA frequency	25 ‡	1.5	18 ‡	1 ‡
Resellers w/ designations	7%	3.25%	7.5%	3.5%
Reseller w/ PCS 25+	30%	7%	21%	14%
Reseller w/ specs	2.25%	2.25%	1.5%	1.5%
Active certs (distributor)	45	3	15	20
New certs/reseller	.75	0.4	0.1	0.3

Measuring success: Third-party assessment

Qualitative criteria to attain the Frontier Distributor designation



Qualitative assessment

- Distributors must pass a third-party assessment to qualify for the designation.
- The comprehensive assessment measures partner support, channel enablement, platform, security, and technical capabilities.

How to pass

Provide clear evidence of channel enablement and support capabilities. The assessment checklist and offer guide will provide comprehensive details on the process and requirements within the assessment. Partners holding the Solutions Partner designation for Support Services and/or certain specializations may waive parts of the distributor assessment.

[Download the assessment checklist](#)

Qualitative metrics

- **Channel enablement:** Centers of excellence, skilling, marketing, professional services, lifecycle, and ISV recruit
- **Platform capabilities:** Analytics, buying/selling, enablement, and technical services offered to indirect resellers
- **Technical capabilities:** Among AI Business Solutions, Cloud & AI Platforms, and Security commercial solution areas
- **Security and compliance:** Incident management, governance, ecosystem strategy, and compliance
- **Support capabilities:** Aligned to [Solutions Partner designation for Support Services](#) requirements, including CSAT, case rates, and support performance

The fastest route to value and differentiation

Partner actions: from prep to renewal

How to attain the Frontier Distributor designation

Step 1: Meet all [telemetry thresholds](#) (quantitative metrics) and ensure your distributor capability score reflects current performance.

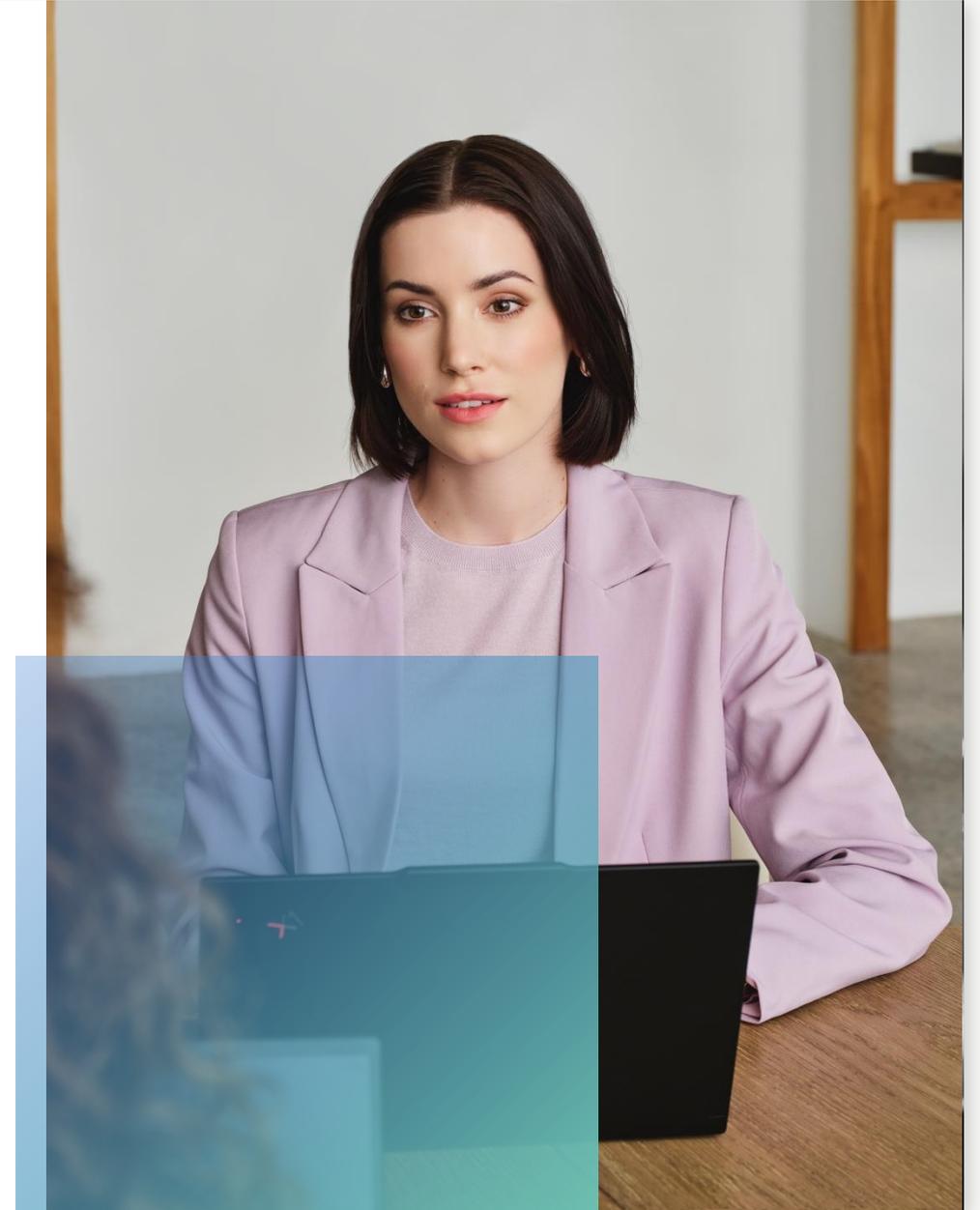
Step 2: Respond to Microsoft outreach about your qualified status and confirm your interest and readiness to take the third-party assessment.

Step 3: Schedule and pass the [third-party assessment](#) (qualitative metrics), provide artifacts (playbooks, SLAs, training catalogs, incident processes), and complete interviews.

Step 4: When Partner Center enrollment becomes available, enroll in the designation via Partner Center, pay the enrollment fee, confirm contacts, and accept terms. (In the meantime, Microsoft will track your enrollment outside of Partner Center.)

Step 5: Maintain annual renewal, complete biannual reassessments, and use score trends to guide investments.

Tip: Schedule your assessment early to start using the badge and benefits sooner.

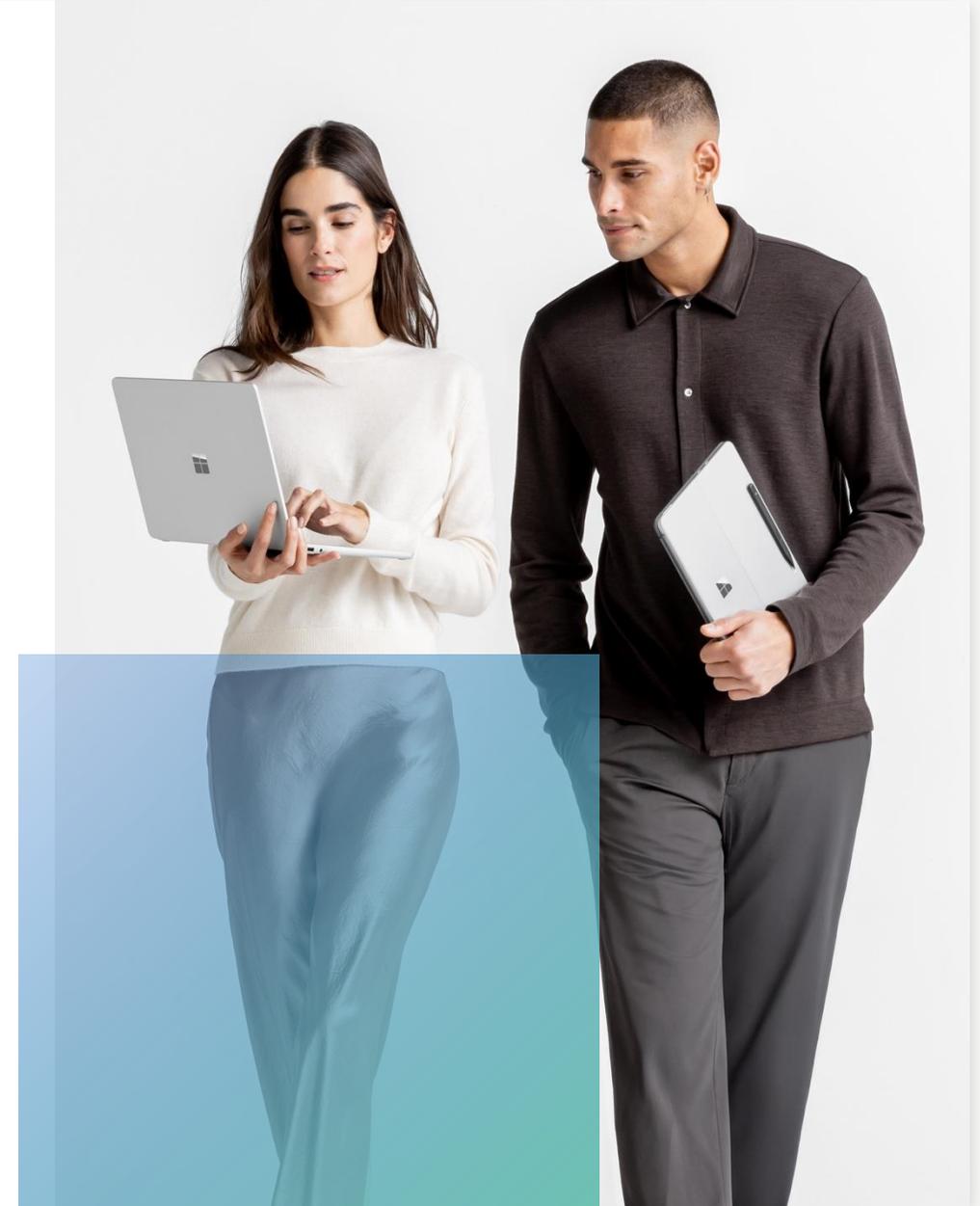


Frontier Distributor designation timelines

Review the milestones to start planning

- **November 2025:** Manual enrollment is available; Microsoft will contact partners who meet the quantitative metrics to proceed with assessment
- **Second half of FY26:** General availability of enrollment, badge, and go-to-market resources in Partner Center

We encourage you to attain the designation now so you can make the most of your benefits.



Secure revenue and reduce risk

Stand out to resellers, unlock benefits, and scale your business

Turn platform and services investments into visible differentiation with the Frontier Distributor designation.

- **Check your status:** Connect with your Microsoft contact to discover how close your organization is to attaining the Frontier Distributor designation, diagnose any gaps, and prioritize plans to reach the qualification thresholds.
- **Get ready:** If you meet the quantitative criteria, respond to our invitation to schedule your assessment and begin your assessment prep.
- **Explore resources:** Review the [Frontier Distributor designation FAQ](#) and the [assessment checklist](#), and check out the updated [Solutions Partner designations page](#).



Thank you

All thresholds and requirements are subject to change.

“Solutions Partner” refers to a company that is a member of the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program and may offer software, services, and/or solutions to customers. Reference to “Solutions Partner” in any content, materials, resources, web properties, etc., and any associated designation should not be interpreted as an offer, endorsement, guarantee, proof of effectiveness or functionality, a commitment, or any other type of representation or warranty on the part of Microsoft. All decisions pertaining and related to your business needs—including but not limited to strategies, solutions, partner selection, implementation—rest solely with your business.

“Frontier Partner” and “Frontier Distributor” refer to a company that is a member of the Microsoft AI Cloud Partner Program and has met specific program requirements, including attainment of Solutions Partner designations, AI-related specializations, or assessment criteria involving AI requirements, as defined by Microsoft. The “Frontier” terminology indicates participation in Microsoft’s partner program and eligibility for associated benefits. It does not represent or imply endorsement, guarantee, or certification of the company’s services, solutions, or performance by Microsoft. All decisions regarding business strategies, solutions, and implementations remain solely with the customer.