

2021 Microsoft Partner Network Partner of the Year Awards

Frequently Asked Questions

Each year, the Microsoft Partner Network Partner of the Year Awards are celebrated and recognized at Microsoft Inspire. This prestigious awards program recognizes partners who have delivered exemplary solutions built on Microsoft technologies. Answers to questions you may have about the 2021 Microsoft Partner Network Partner of the Year Awards program can be found in the sections below. If you do not find the information you need, please email the [Microsoft Partner of the Year Awards team](#). Please allow two (2) business days for a response.

Awards submission tool questions

Are there instructions on how to submit my award?

Yes! Once you log into your Partner Center account and access the award application tool, there are instructions within the awards submission application tool, https://aka.ms/POTYA_Nominate.

Will I be allowed to submit for an award if I do not meet the eligibility requirements?

There are certain criteria in which you must meet to apply which are listed in the awards guidelines. Some criteria will be automatically verified in the award application tool including ISV co-sell ready status, a competency, gold data platform competency, gold data analytics competency, and gold cloud competency. Some awards will also have additional criteria that is not automatically verified in the application tool. Please review award requirements carefully. To be selected as an award winner or finalist you must have met all eligibility requirements specified for that specific award.

How do I edit my entry?

To edit your entry, log into your profile on the award application tool and click on the entry you wish to modify. Nomination entries can be edited, even after you have submitted, as long as the nomination window is open. Once the nomination window closes, no edits can be made to any nomination entry. You can also save your nomination as a draft but note that you must have successfully submitted your award entry for it to be reviewed by the judging panels and be eligible to win.

How do I submit my award entry?

Nominations are only accepted via the award application tool, accessible within your Microsoft Partner Center Account. You must submit after it opens and before it closes.

Will I still be able to access the awards submission application tool after submissions close?

Yes, you will be able to access and view your entry after that date, but you will not be able to make changes or withdraw your submission.

Can we enter more than one nomination for the same award based on having different products or case studies we want to highlight?

Yes, you can enter multiple award nominations for the same award or enter the same case study or story for more than one award.

Can I delete or change my entry after it has been submitted?

Yes, if the nomination window is still open. Simply login into the tool and click on the nomination entry you wish to modify. Once the nomination window closes, no edits can be made.

Can I enter some data and then come back and complete my submission later?

Yes. Be sure to save your work along the way. You may exit the application and when you enter back in, you can go to your dashboard and click on the award you wish to update.

Can I upload video presentations to my entry?

Yes, it is possible to upload files (up to 10 MB per file) as part of your award submission. However, we highly encourage that you provide a URL for these additional materials.

What is the maximum number of characters that can be entered into an answer?

All answers are limited to 8,000 characters (including spaces) per answer. We strongly recommend that you create and finalize your answers in Microsoft Word before copying and pasting them into the award application tool. To see the character count for your answer in Microsoft Word simply highlight your answer and then click on the review tab. Select the Word Count option from the toolbar and reference the "Characters (with spaces)" count in the window that is displayed. Please make sure your answer is 8000 characters or less.

Can you send me the questions in an e-mail message?

Sorry, we are unable to e-mail the questions to you.

PROGRAM QUESTIONS**What is the deadline for submitting my entry?**

The last day to submit an awards entry is April 21, 2021 11:59 P.M. Pacific Time that day. No extensions beyond this will be given. This deadline is FIRM.

Can I submit more than one entry?

Yes, you can submit different entries or nominate different solutions for the same category or enter the same solution in different categories (if it is appropriate for the award category). NOTE: We ask that you not waste your time or the judge's time. You must meet the requirements for the award category you are submitting for in order to be selected as a winner or finalist.

Can I submit my solution in an award category even though I don't meet the eligibility requirements?

To be selected as a winner or finalist in an award category, you must meet the specified eligibility requirements. This requirement cannot be waived.

What award should I apply for? Can you review my solution and advise me?

Unfortunately, we cannot review solutions. However, if you have a Microsoft account manager, they can possibly provide your organization some assistance.

I noticed that some of the award categories change year over year. Why is that?

The Microsoft Partner of the Year Awards is aligned around solution areas. Careful consideration is given each year in formulating the awards offerings, both aligning with the mission and goals of the Microsoft Partner Network and the partner ecosystem. We invite you to review all awards guidelines/requirements to see all categories in which you may qualify.

How can I get help if I don't understand one of the questions?

Email the [Microsoft Partner of the Year Awards team](#). Let us know which question you need assistance with, and we will try to clarify it for you. Please allow two (2) business days for a response.

What are the judging criteria?

These vary by award. However, all entries are judged solely on your executive summary answer to the awards guidelines, so answer them to the best of your ability.

Are you looking for an answer for a single solution or for multiple customers?

This depends on the solution you are nominating for. If this solution has been deployed with multiple customers, then answers to the award questions should apply to all your customers.

By which date must the solution I am nominating have been delivered to my customer?

We are looking for new solutions with an emphasis on market success and growth. For this reason, you should nominate a solution that has been or will be delivered with the latest Microsoft technologies. Please see individual award guidelines for more details.

Do I need to complete a customer-release form?

No, the customer-release form is not required when submitting an award entry. If it is required at a later stage, we will contact you.

Can I submit my award application in languages other than English?

Your award application must be submitted in English, using the awards application tool. However, the solution for which you are applying for an award need not have been localized into English, and your customer may be in any country and speak any language. Note: our judges know this is a global award competition and understand that English is not the primary language of many of the partners nominating. They are asked to take this into consideration during the judging process.

What do winners and finalists receive?

The 2021 Microsoft Partner Network Partner of the Year Award winners and finalists will be celebrated at Microsoft Inspire. Partners who are recognized as finalists and winners will be acknowledged in press releases and will receive a marketing kit (award partner badge, social templates, press templates) with which to promote their accomplishments. This worldwide recognition of excellence identifies winners as a select few who truly stand out in a distinguished, competitive field.

Are there award winners for each country?

The country Partner of the Year Award will be awarded based submissions for that country/region in the award tool (same as global) with one (1) winner per country/region (if that country/region chooses to participate). The rest of the awards are global and recognize one (1) worldwide winner and up to three (3) finalists in each category.

How do we submit nominations to multiple countries?

You can apply directly to any of the country/region awards in which you have a viable solution.

If you are submitting for a category award and also want to nominate for a country or region that you have a viable solution in, you may select up to three countries to associate your nomination with. By selecting a country within a category award, your nomination will also be included in consideration for that country or region award.

What if my solution is not for a specific country?

If the solution in your nomination is global or not associated with a specific country, you can select "N/A" or "Global" in your country selection. Please note that if either of these options is selected, the nomination will not be included in consideration for a Country/Region award.

Do I have to attend Microsoft Inspire to be a finalist or winner?

No, you are not required to attend Microsoft Inspire to be a finalist or winner.

Is any customer information I provide confidential?

If your customer has any proprietary rights in and to the solution you submit, as a condition of being named a winner in this contest, your customer must be willing and able to grant to you and Microsoft the right and permission to feature and otherwise describe the solution in a case study and to use the case study for promotional, editorial, demonstration or any other related purposes.

Tell me more about the confidentiality....

Any customer name or customer information you provide in your award submission will not be published immediately. You may be asked to provide a signed customer release from the end customer if you are an award winner and Microsoft would like to possibly produce a case study.

In the award submission process, we recommend that if you have any privacy concerns, you add a note at the bottom of our submission in the nomination form that states confidentiality concerns for this particular award submission. This will flag the Microsoft product teams that are evaluating this nomination and will note the requirement of a release to publicize any customer information.

Will my customer be contacted?

If you have provided customer references, and it is a requirement of the award in the guidelines, award owners/judges may contact these references when making their final decision. Other than that, there will be no contact with your customer.

Can an internal project be nominated, or must it be commercial?

Only commercial solutions, for which you have at least one (1) external customer, may be nominated for an award.

Can I see other partners' entries to assist me with my own?

All entries are confidential, so it is not possible to see entries from other partners. For assistance, refer to these resources:

[Guidance from our Judges](#)

[How to Write a Great Entry](#)

When will winners and finalists be announced?

The winners and finalists will be announced in early July 2021 on the [awards website](#) and at Microsoft Inspire.

Questions? Send an email to the [Microsoft Partner of the Year Awards team](#). Please allow two (2) business days for a response.