

Which .NET AI tool do you actually need?

Start from the problem, not the model. Most jobs have a clear first pick.

IF YOU NEED...	USE	WHY
Token counts, cost estimates, chunking	Microsoft.ML.Tokenizers	One package, no ML involved
Generation, summarization, open-ended language	LLM via Microsoft.Extensions.AI e.g. Azure AI Foundry	Nothing classical comes close
Multi-step, tool-using agents	Agent Framework	Built for orchestrating agents
A model trained elsewhere	ONNX Runtime	Runs any exported model in-process
Predictions from structured data	ML.NET	In-process, no per-call cost, same output every time
A technique with no .NET path	Python	The research ecosystem lives there