

**Quick Tips for Teams & Channel Leads**

The Network for Employee Affinity Resource Groups Team (referred to as ‘Team’) provides broad information and announcements through the General Channel, which go out to every member of the Team and all NEAR Groups. Posts to the General Channel are only shared by Team owners within the Office of the Vice President for Diversity (VPD). If there is something you think would be appropriate to post in the General Channel, please contact one of the Team owners to assist. Examples include: calls for campus-wide support on specific actions, announcements of critical information, opportunities for collaborations across Group Channels, etc.

*Quick Team Details:*

* All members of NEAR Groups are members of the Team.
* When requesting to join the NEAR Groups Team, new members will be directed to the Terms of Use and Community Guidelines. Members must read though them carefully and fill out [this form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Aoi1r3r_sUurITZ_8uz8iyADuwsaqHNFjbaGOAqyB61UOExZVU5MVDgzOUZUNlM0VEFVNTZXS0ZaVyQlQCN0PWcu) before they will be admitted.
* The Team and the General Channel are not public. Only members of the Team can see what is posted here, and only Team owners in VPD can post to the General Channel.
* Only Team owners can add new members to the Team. If you would like to add a colleague, please let a Team owner know, or have them request to join via [this link.](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Aoi1r3r_sUurITZ_8uz8iyADuwsaqHNFjbaGOAqyB61UOExZVU5MVDgzOUZUNlM0VEFVNTZXS0ZaVyQlQCN0PWcu) Requests to join will be moderated by the Team owners.
* If an employee wishes to be removed or opt out of any Group Channel or the Team, please email Cori Wong at cori.wong@colostate.edu.
* The VPD Team owners are:
	+ Cori Wong
	+ Rachel McKinney
	+ Alicia Sprague

**Quick Tips for Using Teams**

* Notifications
	+ To ensure you stay up to date, please turn ON notifications for the NEAR Groups Team, the General Channel, and any Group Channel to which you are a member.
		- If you prefer to only get emails from your Group Channel and do not wish to be involved with other interactions through Teams, you can leave notifications off for specific channels or even hide the Team.
	+ Instructions for how to do so can be found [here](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/manage-notifications-in-teams-1cc31834-5fe5-412b-8edb-43fecc78413d).
* [Teams Quick Start Guide](https://download.microsoft.com/download/D/9/F/D9FE8B9E-22F5-47BF-A1AB-09539C41FCD0/Teams%20QS.pdf)
* [Microsoft Teams Training Videos](https://support.office.com/en-us/article/microsoft-teams-video-training-4f108e54-240b-4351-8084-b1089f0d21d7?ui=en-US&rs=en-US&ad=US)
* [Microsoft Teams Help Center](https://support.office.com/en-us/teams)
* Don’t mix up “Start a conversation” with “Reply to a conversation.” These are different boxes, and it’s difficult to recover if you start a new conversation when you meant to reply to one. You can hit “Shift” + “Return” to reply.
* @mention individuals to get their attention and a response.
	+ @mention-ing is equivalent to placing someone in the To or CC field of an email. Use @ accordingly; don’t overuse it. No one likes unnecessary notifications.
* To communicate to everyone in a Group, you can @channel in your post.
	+ Use discretion when using the @channel function and only do so when you need to, as everyone will receive a notification.
* Mass Email can be sent to all Group Channel members through the email function.
	+ Only Channel leads are to utilize this function to communicate with all Group Channel members. Messages are delivered as an email and posted to the Group Channel, making this function appropriate for communicating with members who are not active on Microsoft Teams and sharing important messages that would otherwise be sent through a mailing list.
* Any document uploaded will automatically be added to the “Files” tab. This is a great place to keep track of meeting minutes, generate a list of resources, or collaborate on documents.

**Using the Group Channels**

Nested under the Team are multiple Group Channels (or ‘Channels,’ for short), which are designated as affinity spaces to support connection, communication, and community building with respect to members’ shared needs and identities. Employees self-select which Channels to join based on their own identities, interests, and affiliations, and it is requested that all NEAR Groups Team Members demonstrate allyship by respecting the integrity of designated community spaces.

Sharing resources, organizing community events, staying in touch, and offering support are all possible ways members can engage with one another, but there is no prescription for how different communities utilize their Channel, as long as activity aligns with the stated purpose of the NEAR Groups Team and honors the Terms of Use and Community Guidelines.

Collaboration across Group Channels is highly encouraged. To foster solidarity and support across multiple Channels, members may intentionally reach out to one another through personal communication, or request that information and requests be shared by VPD Team Owners on the General Channel.

*Quick Channel Details:*

* Someone cannot be a member of a Channel without joining the Team first.
* It is possible for someone to join the NEAR Groups Team and not be a member of any Group Channel, in which case they will only have access to posts made to the General Channel by VPD staff.
* Members are visible to each other within the same Group Channel.
	+ All employees who join the NEAR Groups Team are added to the General Channel and visible to one another as members of the General Channel.
* Group Channels are hidden within the Team.
	+ Group Channels, their members, and the shared content can only be seen by other members of that channel.
* Channel leads will act as Group Channel administrators and be responsible for moderating group content. There can be multiple Channel leads, and they are to be designated in the Contact List of each Group Channel.
* Only Team owners can add members to the Team. If you would like to invite a colleague, please let a Team owner know, or have them request to join via [this link.](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=Aoi1r3r_sUurITZ_8uz8iyADuwsaqHNFjbaGOAqyB61UOExZVU5MVDgzOUZUNlM0VEFVNTZXS0ZaVyQlQCN0PWcu) Requests to join the NEAR Groups Team and Group Channels will be approved by Team owners in the Office of the Vice President for Diversity.

*Expectations and Tips for Channel Leads:*

* Get creative! The Group Channel is for your community – so make it work for you, in whatever ways work best to support faculty and staff. If you want to organize your own events or social gatherings, go for it! VPD created the virtual channels, but you get to decide how to leverage them.
* Make sure Group Channel members know who the Channel leads are by providing names and contact information in a File or Tab.
* Provide ways for the most energetic folks to be more engaged! Identify others to help set the tone and norms of your Group Channel by encouraging them to role model posts or resource sharing. They can help moderate posts, organize social gatherings, or coordinate ways to connect with others who are hard to reach with within your communities.
	+ If additional roles are created for other members to help manage the Group Channel, include their contact information as well.
* To communicate important information to all members of your Group Channel, send a message by emailing the Channel through Teams. This will post in the Group Channel and go to members’ inboxes.
	+ This function is only to be used by Channel leads.
* Different communities may want different things out of their affinity spaces. Channel leads play a key role in establishing expectations for how the Group Channel can be used to support the needs of their communities.
	+ Some suggestions include:
		- Create a file for members to share information about local restaurants, businesses, and organizations that are inclusive and supportive of your communities’ diverse needs.
		- If University policies or resources are especially relevant to your group, create a file where people can share helpful information for better navigating our own institutional systems.
* Encourage members of your Group Channel to look out for and support each other online by addressing each other in the spirit of community.
* Be quick to respond to private messages flagging disruptive content; if someone sees a questionable post, help minimize risk by privately communicating with the poster (if possible) or promptly notifying a Team owner for support.