



# Ally-IL

# Everyone needs an Ally!



## What is **Ally-IL**?

We recognize that everyone needs an ally! With the help of the State of Illinois Teams application, DCFS can now provide a supporting hand through Ally-IL. Ally teams provide a secure space to bring together caseworkers, youth, caregivers, and their alliances.

Ally-IL does not replace in-person meetings but provides a virtual extension to continue discussions and engage with the primary caseworker one-on-one and in a team setting. As a guest, you can expect to use features like chat, virtual/audio calls, and document sharing. These features promote communication, team alignment on goals and tasks, and recognition when goals are met.

The included Frequently Asked Questions guide you through what an Ally-IL team is including computer requirements, Federal assistance, getting started with the Ally team, and learning resources.

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# Frequently Asked Questions

## SECTION 1: BEFORE YOU GET STARTED...learn more about privacy, internet assistance, and technical requirements.

### PRIVACY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

**What level of privacy and confidentiality can I expect with my involvement in an Ally Team?**

Guests should have no expectation of privacy when accessing or using this system or any of its components. By accessing and using the State of Illinois Teams tenant, you consent to monitoring and recording which may be disclosed for administrative, disciplinary, civil or criminal actions, penalties, or prosecution.

Terms and conditions are provided and must be accepted when accepting the Teams email invitation. We strongly encourage everyone to be careful when sharing Protected Health Information (PHI) in Teams.

**To limit people who should not have access to PHI or other sensitive information, make sure you share information to the right Ally team channel.** Practical suggestions for protecting information include:

- **ALL** Ally team members will have access to messages (posts) and information (files, photos, etc.) shared in the **General** channel.
- **Private** channels allow limited, select members to access information. Before sharing PHI or other sensitive data to a **Private** channel, make sure there is no one in the private channel who should **not** have access to the information.
- Talk to your worker about creating a private channel to share PHI or other sensitive data that should not be accessed by other team members.
- Do not discuss confidential and PHI data in a text, audio or video chat with other Ally team members who should not have access to that information.

**What personal information is available to other alliances in Teams?**

Names, email addresses and profile/team photo are available to team members and guests.

**Note:** You must agree to the Terms of Use to participate in Teams.

If you are concerned about your email being shared, you can create a separate email account to use for the Ally team.

**Can a caregiver facilitate an Ally team for children who are too young to participate directly?**

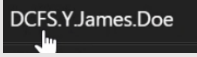
Yes. The caseworker will enter the caregiver's email address in the youth's person management record when creating the Ally team. The caregiver can then facilitate the Ally team and include the youth accordingly.


## FEDERAL ASSISTANCE AND TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

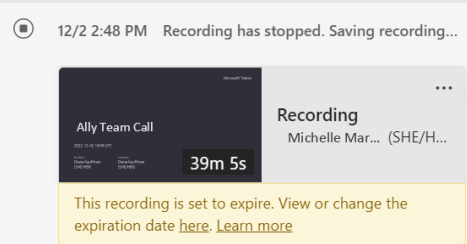

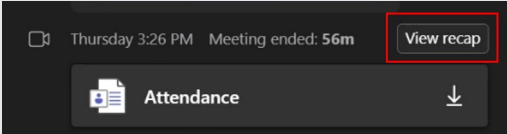
<b>I don't have access to internet...can I still use Ally-IL?</b>	Flex funds can be used to help with internet access. The caseworker's supervisor must send a request to the Regional Administrator for approval. A Child and Family Team meeting must occur with the team requesting the funds to resolve a barrier.
<b>Do I need to pay for Ally-IL?</b>	No, it is free to participate. Guests do not need a Microsoft paid subscription or to be a licensed Office 365 user to participate in Ally teams.
<b>I can't get Ally-IL to load...</b>	<p>Microsoft Teams is supported on the Windows OS and web browsers, Android and Apple devices and Chromebooks.</p> <p>For additional details on hardware requirements, <a href="#">read this</a>.</p>
<b>What are my options for audio devices when participating in Teams meetings?</b>	<p>There are multiple options when participating in Microsoft Teams. Built-in computer mic and speakers are an option.</p> <p>If you prefer earphones, you can use cabled earphones with a built-in microphone. Simply plug the headphone jack into the headphone port on your computer.</p> <p>Or use a wireless headset or earbuds if your computer or mobile device supports a USB or Bluetooth.</p> <p><a href="#">Learn more</a> about managing your device settings in Teams.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> To accommodate privacy considerations, we strongly discourage speaker settings on a computer or mobile device when participating in a Teams meeting in a <b>shared</b> space.</p>

## SECTION 2: GET STARTED with team invitations, adding members, and engaging with the team.

### THE ALLY TEAM AND CHANNELS

<p><b>I can't locate my original Teams email invitation.</b></p>	<p>First, check your spam or junk folder. If you still can't locate the invitation, contact your caseworker to let them know. They can send another invitation.</p> <p>Once you receive/locate the invite, be sure to select <b>State of Illinois Guest Account</b>, and review and accept the Terms of Use to join the Ally team.</p>
<p><b>Why did I receive more than one invitation to participate in Ally Teams?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Check the name of the Ally Team. You may receive more than one invitation if you have not accepted the original invite.</li> <li>2. Depending on your case situation, the caseworker may decide to create multiple Ally Teams, which would result in more than one invitation.</li> <li>3. Alliances (service providers, therapists, etc.) may receive invitations to participate in Ally Teams for different youth and families.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Why does the Ally team start with "DCFS.Y...?"</b></p>	<p>"DCFS.Y..." is automatically added to identify it as a DCFS youth team, which supports DCFS data reporting requirements.</p> 
<p><b>Who creates the Ally team?</b></p>	<p>The primary assigned worker will create and manage the team with the support of their supervisor as co-owner.</p>
<p><b>Can I add people to the Ally Team?</b></p>	<p>Only team owners can invite people to the Ally Team. If you have another caregiver or alliance you would like to add to the Ally team, then speak with your caseworker.</p>
<p><b>How can I see the members and guests in the Ally Team?</b></p>	<p>You can identify owners and members of the Ally team by clicking on the <b>More options</b> icon (...) to the right of the Ally Team name. Select <b>Manage Team</b> to see the names and roles.</p>
<p><b>Channels:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) What is a channel?</li> <li>b) What is the difference between a public vs. private Ally channel?</li> <li>c) Why is there more than one channel in the Ally team?</li> <li>d) Can guests create a channel?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Channels are like folders. They store posts (chats), files, and more so members can access information.</li> <li>b) All channels are either <b>public</b> to allow all members access or <b>private</b>, where only select members are granted access. <a href="#">Learn more about private channels.</a></li> <li>c) All Ally teams have a <b>General</b> channel. <b>All</b> team members have access to share and access posts and files here. This channel should be used for 'general' information like team-wide updates and reminders.</li> </ol> <p>A caseworker may choose to create additional channels for organizational purposes. For example, a channel called <b>Team Goals</b> may consist of posts and files that are related to goals and objectives of the</p>

	<p>Ally team. This would likely be a <b>public</b> channel to allow everyone access.</p> <p>The Ally team may include multiple alliances (service providers, therapists, etc.). Each alliance may share sensitive information that should not be viewed by the whole team. The caseworker can create a <b>private</b> channel(s) and add only those who need to view the sensitive information shared within that channel.</p> <p>d) Guests cannot create channels. Speak with your caseworker about the need for a new channel (public or private) in the Ally team.</p>
<p><b>How do I know if a channel is private or public?</b></p>	<p>A private channel has a <b>lock</b> icon  to the right of the channel name.</p>
<p><b>ENGAGING WITH THE ALLY TEAM</b></p>	
<p><b>What can I do within the Ally team?</b></p>	<p>The caseworker will help you navigate the Ally team. To facilitate sharing and engagement, the Ally team can:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Send private messages through chat or post a <b>New conversation</b> in the channel for all members to see.</li> <li>• Participate in scheduled meetings.</li> <li>• Jump on impromptu audio or video calls.</li> <li>• Share and view files such as documents and photos.</li> <li>• Have some fun posting stickers, GIFs, and recognize members and, most importantly, youth on achievements with <b>Praise</b>. <a href="#">Learn More</a></li> </ul>
<p><b>How can I communicate with my Ally team?</b></p>	<p>You can send a private chat to the caseworker for one-to-one questions/conversations. These chats will stay between you unless you add more people to the chat.</p> <p>To message multiple people in an Ally team, send a message (Post) in the appropriate channel. Like a group message, everyone in the channel will see the message.</p>
<p><b>Can I add a guest to a private or group chat?</b></p>	<p>You should speak with the caseworker if there is someone you think should be added to the team, temporarily or permanently. If appropriate, the caseworker can send a team invitation.</p> <p>You can search the Ally team by entering someone's email address <b>not</b> their last name, first name in the search bar at the top of the Teams app.</p>
<p><b>What if I miss a chat?</b></p>	<p>You will receive an email notification stating you missed a chat. You may also receive notification about channel activities such as posts or a file being shared.</p>

<p><b>How frequently should I check the Ally team?</b></p>	<p>Frequency may vary based on current and upcoming tasks, goals, and appointments. We encourage you to work with the caseworker on forming a healthy habit checking the Ally team for updates.</p> <p>Like appointments, it is often helpful to set a personal reminder for time-sensitive tasks such as meetings or submitting documentation.</p>
<p><b>Why can't I open a file in Chat?</b></p>	<p>Files must be shared within an Ally team channel – not through <b>chat</b>. Because the Ally team may have more than one channel, we encourage you to talk to the primary caseworker to confirm the best channel to share the file.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> Once shared, the file will be stored in the team channel and accessible by any channel member. If you do not want others to edit a file such as Word or Excel, you may save a file as a PDF before sharing to a channel.</p>
<p><b>Can I record a meeting?</b></p>	<p>Meetings can be recorded <b>but</b> the option to start the recording is only accessible to certain State of Illinois staff such as the team owner.</p> <p><b>Note:</b> A notification message is displayed to alert all meeting participants that the meeting is being recorded.</p>
<p><b>Can I watch a recorded Teams meeting?</b></p>	<p>There are a few rules to access a recorded meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• You must be part of the Ally team channel to watch a recorded meeting. Guests who are not part of the team channel will not have recording access.</li> <li>• To access the recording, the organizer must invite the channel to the meeting or use <b>Meet Now</b>.</li> <li>• Recordings for channel meetings will appear in the channel as a post</li> </ul> 
<p><b>Can I access meeting notes after a meeting?</b></p>	<p>Yes, to access the meeting chat, select <b>Chat</b> on the left side of Teams and choose the meeting in the chat list. Then, select <b>Recap</b>.</p> <p><b>Tip:</b> Meeting chats are preceded by calendar icon  and have the same title as the meeting.</p> 

## SECTION 3: TIPS AND TRICKS for Teams chat, meetings, file sharing, and more.

Can't find what you need? See the General section for additional help!

### GENERAL

#### How do I learn more about Microsoft Teams?

There are two ways to access Microsoft self-learning resources. Both allow you to search for short 'how-to' articles and videos.

1. For Teams-specific questions, you can search for help right from the Teams app. From your computer, just open the Ally team and click **Help** in the lower left rail. Then, select one of the following:
  - a) **Topics** to see what's already out there
  - b) **Training** to access videos and guides on using Teams
  - c) **What's new** to see the latest and greatest
2. Click [here](#) or visit <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365> for more on Teams or other Microsoft tools like Word and Excel.

Go [here](#) or visit <http://bit.ly/3uKG2OF> to access Microsoft QuickStart guides for tools including Teams, Word and more.

#### How do I manage Ally team notifications?

From the Teams desktop application:

- Click the ... to the right of the channel and select **Channel Notifications**.

From the Teams mobile application:

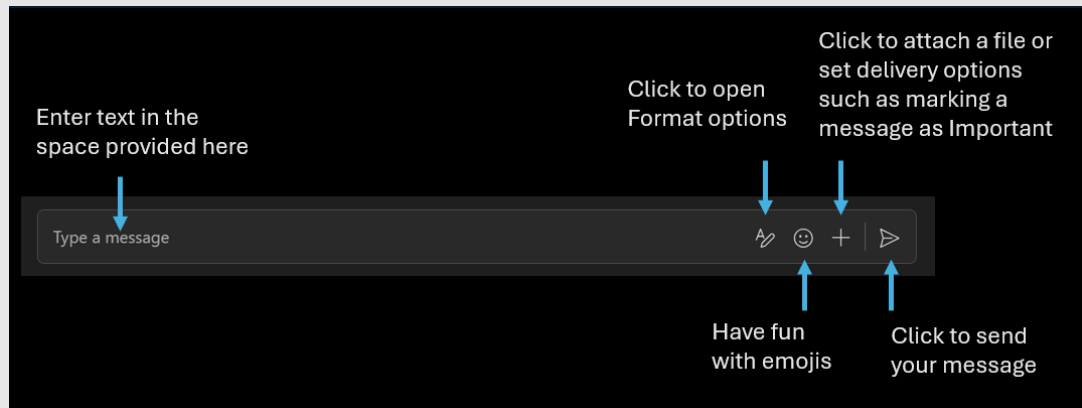
- First, enable Teams mobile notifications in your device settings, then within the Teams app,
- Tap **Menu > Notifications**.
- **Set, modify, or manage** these notifications:
- Tap **General Activity** and toggle notifications on or off for messages, mentions, calls, and more.
- Tap **Channels** to manage which channels you're subscribed to.

Tap **Meetings** to opt in for all meeting notifications

## CHAT

**How do I message my caseworker or another team member/guest?**

Simply go to the Ally team and scroll to the bottom of your screen. Click on **Start a post** and enter your message in space that says **Type a message**.



**Note:** All members of the Ally team channel can see your message. For the sharing of confidential information, you may ask your caseworker to create a private channel where other guests do not have access to information including messages.

**Can I hide and unhide chat streams?**

Yes. If using:

- **Mobile:** Swipe left on the chat, tap **More**, select **Hide**
- **Desktop:** Click More Options ... right of the chat and select **Hide**
- To unhide, search for the chat by name in the search box, tap the ... button and tap **Unhide**.

**Can I edit or delete chats?**

Teams permissions are set to allow everyone to edit and/or delete their own chat(s), however Team Owners can adjust these permissions if needed. Please be advised, per government retention policies, all text chat content is retained and accessible to personnel with authorized access.

**If I delete a chat, can I undo the delete?**

It depends. If you have not exited out of the chat thread, there is a temporary option to undo a deleted chat (desktop/web app only).

**Important:** If you move away from the chat and return later, the undo delete option is no longer available. Also, the **undo delete** option is not available in Teams mobile.

## FILE SHARING

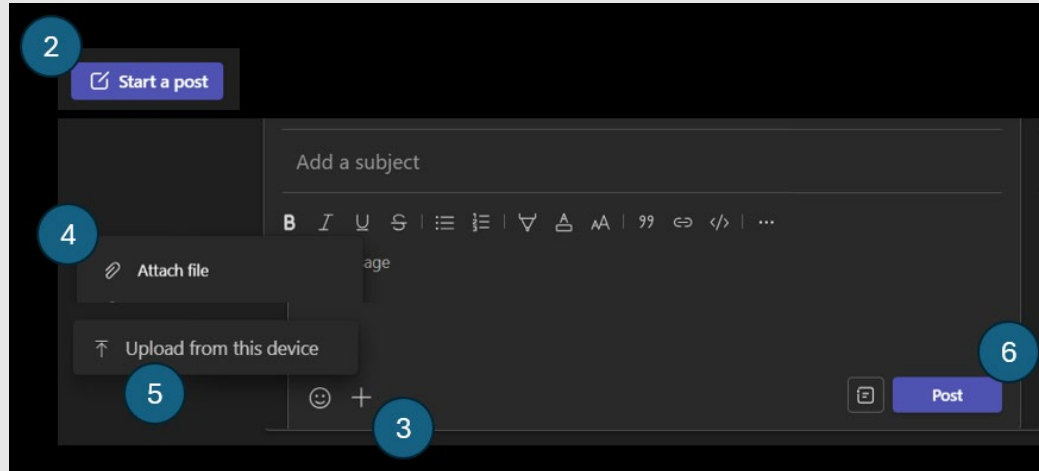
**How do I upload a file to an Ally team?**

When using a personal computer (PC), save the file (document, photo, etc.) to your computer. Then:

1. Select the team channel you wish to share the file
2. Click **Start a post** at the bottom of the channel
3. Click the + icon
4. Select **Attach file**

5. Select **Upload from this device**
6. Locate the file and double click the file to attach and then click **Post**

**Note:** Once the file is uploaded, a link will appear in the post. In the **Type a message** section of the post, you can write a message and tag a member, such as the caseworker, to alert members that a file is ready for review.



**Tip:** All team members can see posts and access files uploaded to **General** channel. Be aware of confidentiality considerations and discuss with the caseworker if there is a need to facilitate private conversations and file sharing. Team owners can create a **private channel** to facilitate private channel conversations and file sharing. [Learn more about private channels.](#)

If you have the Teams mobile app, you can send photos in private chat and an Ally team channel.

**How do I find a shared file?**

Select the **Files** tab at the top of the team channel to search and access files saved to the associated channel.

**Tip:** All members have access to files shared in the **General** channel of the Ally team. The team owner must add you to private channel(s) to access files shared in those channel(s).

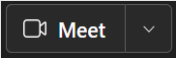

**What do I do if I receive an error message when opening a file?**

Make sure the file is being shared in a team channel and not a Chat. You must be a member of the team channel to share and access files. Refresh the site and try again.

**How do I delete a file from a Teams channel?**

Speak with your caseworker if you need a file removed from a channel.

## MEETINGS AND AUDIO/VIDEO CALLS

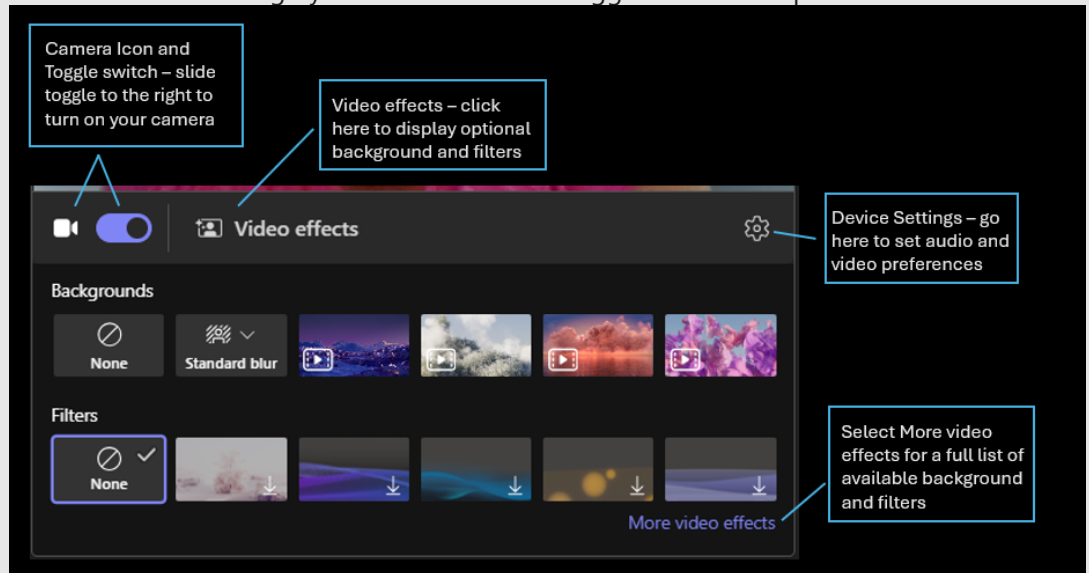
<p><b>Can I talk with my caseworker outside of chat?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. You may receive a meeting invitation from <b>Outlook</b>, which will appear in your email inbox (if you have more than one email, remember to check the inbox you provided to the caseworker at the time your Ally team was created).</li> <li>2. You may receive a meeting invitation from within the <b>Ally team channel</b>, which will show as a posted message alerting all channel members a meeting has been scheduled.</li> <li>3. Your Ally team has <b>Video/Audio call</b> capabilities. You may receive an unscheduled call in a general or private channel. You can also use this channel feature for unscheduled meetings when it's easier to just talk instead of messaging.</li> </ol> <p><b>Tip:</b> To initiate a video or audio call with <b>all</b> channel members, use these icons located at the top right of your team channel.</p> <p><b>Considerations:</b> Be sure you are in the desired team channel as all channel members will be called in a group setting.</p> <p><b>Desktop/Web App:</b></p>  <p><b>Mobile App:</b></p> 
<p><b>Does Microsoft Teams meetings offer a call-in number?</b></p>	<p>Currently, a call-in number is not available for Microsoft Teams meetings. To join, simply click the <b>Join Meeting</b> link on any smart phone or device.</p>
<p><b>How do I join a Teams meetings using my computer or mobile device?</b></p>	<p>From your computer or mobile phone (if you have the Teams app installed), click the <b>Join Meeting</b> link from the invitation to join a meeting.</p>

## How can I blur or change my video background when participating in Teams meetings?


To change your background **before** a meeting starts:

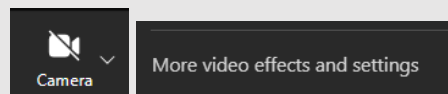
- While you're setting up your video and audio before joining a meeting, toggle the camera to the **on** position. Then, select **Video effects**. It's to the right of the camera toggle. Your background options, including **Standard blur**, will display underneath. If you do not like what you see, select **More video effects** for a full list of background options.



**Note:** Video effects is grayed out if the camera toggle is in the **off** position.

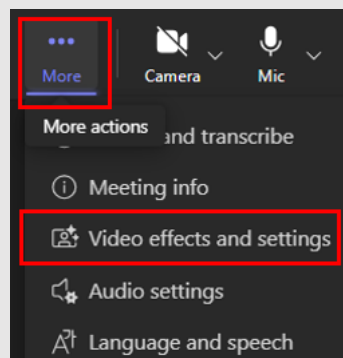


To change your background **during** a meeting, try one of these two ways:

- Click the drop-down arrow next to the Camera icon. Select **Standard blur**  or your preferred background. Scroll to the bottom and select **More video effects** for a full list of background and filter effects.



- Go to your meeting controls and select **More actions**  followed by **Video effects and settings**. Select **Standard blur**  or your preferred background.  
**Tip:** You can select **Preview** to see what your background looks like before you apply it, and then select **Apply**.



<p><b>Are private or group audio and video calls retained?</b></p>	<p>Only <b>recorded</b> Teams meetings are retained*. A recording will automatically be deleted after a set period determined by the State of Illinois Teams administrator. The date is a general period such as 60-days, but the recording owner can change the date.</p> <p>*Meetings (scheduled and impromptu using <b>Meet Now</b>) can be recorded. A notification message is displayed to alert all participants that the meeting is being recorded.</p>
<p><b>How do I resolve an echo on a Teams meeting?</b></p>	<p>Try the following tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using a headset, earphones, or external speaker, be sure to mute your built-in computer speaker.</li> <li>• Try using the built-in speakers on your computer.</li> <li>• An echo might indicate poor internet connectivity. Free up bandwidth by turning off video.</li> <li>• If your laptop is connected to an external monitor, your echo could be related to internal speakers in that monitor. Unplug the external monitor.</li> <li>• Mute yourself when you're not speaking so others don't hear an echo.</li> </ul> <p><b>Tip:</b> Open <b>Meeting Settings</b> to adjust audio and speaker settings or to make a test call.</p>
<p><b>Can I set up a meeting reminder?</b></p>	<p>You will need to set your own reminder in your personal calendar (iPhone calendar, Google calendar, etc.) when accepting the meeting invitation.</p>
<p><b>I missed a Request to Join a meeting. What do I do?</b></p>	<p>The caseworker may contact you through chat or the Ally team if you are late or missed a scheduled meeting.</p> <p>If you have the Microsoft Teams application up, you may receive a call or message stating, <b>Request to Join</b>. Just accept the request to automatically join the meeting.</p> <p>If you missed the request and the meeting has <b>not</b> ended, use the meeting invitation to join. Otherwise, send a chat to the caseworker to discuss next steps.</p>
<p><b>Can I forward Teams meetings invitations to other people?</b></p>	<p>While meeting invitations can be forwarded to others, we strongly encourage you to contact your caseworker if you want to invite someone else to the meeting or use an alternate contact method.</p> <p>Forwarded invites will <b>not</b> receive updates such as changes to the date/time, notes/agenda, or added attachments.:</p> <p><b>Note:</b> You can copy/paste the Teams meeting link (from the meeting details) and email it should the need arise.</p>

## PROFILE AND TEAMS DESKTOP SETTINGS

### What should I do if my email address changes?

1. Advise your caseworker that you have a new email address. Your caseworker will invite your new email address to the Ally Team. You'll receive another Teams invitation to accept.

If you have a Microsoft account, be sure to update your email address under your Profile settings.

[Learn more.](#)