

# **Madison House**

## **External Communications Guidelines**

### **Table of Contents**

Last updated: September 2025

We want to promote your content on Madison House's social media channels and in the news! In order to continue providing you with resources, build volunteer programs, and serve our community, we need to share Madison House's story and volunteer opportunities. If you would like to create social media content for your Madison House program, please review the following guidelines. If, after reviewing these guidelines, you have questions, please email Madison House's Director of Communications, Christine Thalwitz at [christine@madisonhouse.org](mailto:christine@madisonhouse.org). We are here to support your efforts!

1. **Getting Started**
2. **Best Practices**
  - a. Problematic Language
  - b. Use of the Madison House Logo
  - c. Style guide
3. **Posting on Madison House Social Media Accounts**
  - a. Methods of Posting
4. **Social Media Guidelines**
  - a. Guidelines
5. **Crisis Communications**
6. **T-Shirt & Swag Guidelines**
7. **Questions?**

# Getting Started

- Please review the resources and guidelines on this page carefully.
- Create content for your Madison House program following the guidelines set below.
- If you are unable, for any reason, to provide marketing material within a one-week time frame, please contact the Madison House [Director of Communications](#) to discuss other possible options. We are here to support you and want to promote your program's events/fundraisers/socials/etc!
- **Note:** Materials for **internal** social events (such as a PAM, etc.) do not need to be approved by the Director of Communications. **Materials for *external* events, programs, etc. must be approved by the Director of Communications. When in doubt, feel free to ask your advisor or email the Director of Communications to clarify.**

## Best Practices

When creating any form of content, embrace Madison House's nature of ***building partnerships collaboratively*** within the community. Avoid all language that implies UVA students / Madison House volunteers are heroically going into the community to save the day.

**Example:** "Madison House volunteers made a big difference today helping out refugees who don't have cars."

**Revised:** "Madison House volunteers worked with the International Refugee Commission to provide transportation for refugee families within our community."

### **Problematic Language:**

Do not use racist, sexist, bigoted, ableist, or otherwise problematic language.

#### **Examples:**

- Do not shorten "Madison House" to "MadHouse"
- Do not use descriptors like: spooky, gypped, crazy, insane, lame, retarded, OCD, derp, illegal, fat, dumb, uppity, hysterical, bugger, spirit animal, tribe, etc.
- Do not use 'othering' language and lingual structures. For example: "We enjoy going into ***their*** community" or "We enjoy helping ***those*** people". Similarly, do not use language that separates you from the community, such as being in a "UVA bubble."
- Do not refer to communities as a monolith. For example: "The Latino community" would be incorrect because there are multiple Latinx communities that cannot, and should not, be lumped together. Please also do not refer to communities or individuals as 'at risk'.

- Avoid using labels, instead use factual information. For example, the statement “We help low-income families file their tax returns” is better expressed as “We help individuals who earn less than \$70,000 annually file their tax returns.”

## **Use of the Madison House Logo**

Madison House appreciates the opportunity to increase awareness of our volunteers' contributions to the local community via marketing materials from our volunteers, community partners, media, and friends.

We ask that, ***prior to using the Madison House logo***, you contact Madison House's Director of Communications, Christine Thalwitz, at [christine@madisonhouse.org](mailto:christine@madisonhouse.org) for approval. A volunteer's affiliation with Madison House must be clearly identified in any marketing or development materials that feature them. Similarly, an [approved Madison House logo](#) must be displayed clearly and legibly. Any physical, print, or digital item that uses a Madison House logo must be approved by the Director of Communications. Any alterations of the Madison House logo must also be approved by the Director of Communications.

## **Madison House Style Guide**

These fonts and colors follow the established Madison House branding guidelines and should be used on any public-facing Madison House related material.

Madison House Blue

PMS 654 C

CMYK: 100, 67, 0, 38

RGB: 0, 61, 121

HEX #18305C

Madison House Yellow

PMS 123 C

CMYK: 0, 22, 91, 0

RGB: 225, 200, 47

HEX #FFC82F

Title Font is Bodoni

Text font is Franklin Gothic or Futura

Web Alternates: Proxima Nova, Montserrat, Raleway, & Open Sans

Madison House

# **Posting on Madison House's Social Media Account**

**We recommend that you create content for Madison House social media channels to promote your program and recruit volunteers. You may not create a social media channel for your individual program.**

**There are two ways to publish to Madison House's social media pages:**

Option 1: We are happy to post on social media on behalf of your program. Please use this [social media submission form](#) to submit content.

Option 2: Render your own posts in Buffer as a draft for future publishing.

Buffer Tutorial Video: <https://watch.screencastify.com/v/zCjMSXH37EUz3jrCjID1>

Steps to publish:

- 1) Request access to Buffer by emailing [christine@madisonhouse.org](mailto:christine@madisonhouse.org)
- 2) Watch the tutorial video.
- 3) When you are ready to post, log in to Buffer.
- 4) Choose which social media platforms you want to post on (Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter/X).
- 5) Once you have created your content, save the posts as drafts and email [christine@madisonhouse.org](mailto:christine@madisonhouse.org) to let her know that there is content for her to approve and inform her when you want it uploaded.

**Final Note:** Social media is not just a platform to announce upcoming events or activities but also a social tool that can help you to engage with your audience(s). It is important to develop a strategy that fulfills your communications objectives and offers something valuable (information, entertainment, etc.) to your audience(s). Once your posts are published, comment and share them on your personal accounts.




**Have questions regarding social media and how to leverage it for your Program? Please contact the [Director of Communications](#) and set up a time to discuss next steps.**

## **Social Media Guidelines**

**Guidelines:**

1. **All marketing material for fundraisers or other events promoted via Madison House or Madison House programs must first be approved by**

**Madison House's Director of Communications.** Materials for program events must be sent to the Director of Communications at least **one week** prior to the start of an event.

2. **Post photos that feature diverse populations of students, community partners, and friends.** Be intentional with your content. Do not post photos of minors without express consent from all relevant parties (community partner, parents, etc.)
3. **When designing marketing material for your program, ensure that the Madison logo is clear and visible.** For optimal branding, the Madison House logo should be prominently featured. Try to create a hierarchy of information on the page—choose a featured headline and graphic/photo to capture attention. Avoid unnecessary clutter and text in your design—empty space is the reader's friend!
4. **For the text associated with each post, use a tone that is fun and approachable, yet grammatically correct and professional** — no misspellings, incomplete sentences, incorrect statistics and information, etc. Include periods, commas, quotation marks, etc. where applicable.
5. **Use hashtags when posting on platforms that support hashtag use. Develop a set of consistent and unique hashtags to make your content searchable and discoverable.** Common hashtags include: #MadisonHouse #HoosHooServe #HoosVolunteer #service #community #leadership. Best practices for hashtags include using capitalization in long strings of text that may be misread or are difficult to scan. Capitalization also improves accessibility. Please do **not** use the hashtag #MadHouse or any other similar variant.
6. **Consider using emojis.** Emojis do not need to be included in each post, but they may increase user views and engagement. Emojis frequently used by Madison House includes:  (blue heart),  (yellow heart), and  (house with garden / house and tree).
7. **Tag our community partners in posts when applicable.** We can help build their presence, too!

## **Crisis Communications**

If Madison House is involved in a crisis, receives negative feedback, or is part of a negative issue that dominates the social conversation, remember that addressing it via social media from a Madison House Program account is similar to issuing a press release or speaking on behalf of Madison House. **Responses to negative feedback, community crises, or otherwise problematic conversations online should be coordinated with [Madison House's](#)**

**Executive Director, Mary Denlinger and Madison House's Director of Communications, Christine Thalwitz.**

As a best practice, if a national emergency or crisis unrelated to Madison House or Madison House programs dominates social conversation, make sure to consider the appropriateness of your posts. You want to avoid unintentionally appearing tone deaf or unaware of current events.

## **T-shirt & Swag Guidelines**

Program directors can coordinate t-shirt & swag orders on behalf of their volunteers by fulfilling the following requirements:

1. **All program t-shirts & swag MUST include a [Madison House logo](#) displayed legibly on the front of the shirt or item.** The logo does *not* need to be printed in full color; it can also be printed in one color.
2. **Any physical, print or digital item that uses a Madison House logo MUST be approved by the Director of Communications.** If you would like a different version of the Madison House logo, or if you would like to manipulate it, please email [christine@madisonhouse.org](mailto:christine@madisonhouse.org).
3. **Because your program's shirt or swag design will represent Madison House to the broader community, the final design MUST be approved by Madison House staff.** Submit your design for approval to the Director of Communications, Christine Thalwitz at [christine@madisonhouse.org](mailto:christine@madisonhouse.org).

**Payment:** Please check with your Head Program Director and Program Advisor regarding your program budget. While programs are not permitted to spend 100% of their budget on t-shirts, they are allowed to subsidize a portion of the cost of t-shirts for volunteers. Specific amounts for each program are being determined individually.

**Vendors:** You can place a t-shirt order with any company. Madison House recommends **CustomInk**. They have an easy-to-use DesignLab where you can create your own design. They also offer *free* design assistance, so if you need to incorporate the Madison House logo into a template, they can help you with that step. If you have any questions at all, you can call CustomInk at 1-800-293-4232 or send an email to [service@customink.com](mailto:service@customink.com). CustomInk can create a [Group Page](#) for your shirt order. With that option, you can choose to have your volunteers pay for their part of the order online, reimburse you in person, or a combination of the two. The minimum order is usually 6 shirts. You can save a design with CustomInk and order more shirts in the future.

**Timeline:** CustomInk offers a standard 2-Week Delivery. You can also upgrade your order to 1-Week Rush or Super Rush (guaranteed 3-day delivery).

## **Questions?**

Contact the Madison House Director of Communications: [christine@madisonhouse.org](mailto:christine@madisonhouse.org)