

# NBPHE PARTNER GUIDE

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## FOR EMPLOYERS

The National Board of Public Health Examiners (NBPHE) is eager to support organizations dedicated to strengthening the public health workforce and invest in their employees to ensure that new and current public health professionals meet national standards and have professional growth opportunities. This planning guide outlines the steps, timeline, and decision points you can consider as your organization plans to promote employee certification through the Certified in Public Health (CPH) and future credentialing exams.

**CPH** Certified <sup>in</sup>  
Public Health

by National Board of Public Health Examiners



# Table of Contents

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Page 3..... Why Promote the CPH for Your Employees?

Page 4..... Why do Employers Care about the CPH?

Page 5..... Become an NBPHE Partner

Page 6..... Ready to Start Your CPH Program?

Page 7..... STEP ONE – Planning (months 1 - 3)

Page 8..... STEP TWO – Preparation (months 4 - 6)

Page 9..... STEP THREE – Certification (months 6-12+)

Page 10..... Partner Agreement

# Why Promote the CPH for Your Employees?

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As public health organizations recover from unprecedented public health challenges, like the COVID-19 pandemic and the Mpox outbreak, the need to invest in the public health workforce is more critical than ever. Public health professionals are the backbone of our communities and empowering them with advanced skills and certification is a lasting investment for both employers and CPH Certificants alike. Earning the CPH credential helps public health professionals build confidence and gives them a sense of pride in their achievement and in their work. The Certified in Public Health (CPH) credential is the only credential of its kind for public health practitioners that demonstrates their well-rounded knowledge of core public health sciences and their commitment to continuing their expertise in the field through recertification.

In addition to holding the credential, preparing for the CPH exam and the CPH recertification process provide individuals with professional development opportunities. When preparing for the exam, the candidate has the opportunity to refine critical skills, address knowledge gaps, and deepen their understanding of the ten public health [domains](#) covered on the examination. Once certified, Certificants are required to maintain the credential through recertification which ensures they stay current on best practices and continue to meet and maintain a professional standard. This continuous development benefits the individual and the organizations and communities they serve, fostering a stronger, more prepared public health workforce. Certification isn't just a milestone – it's a commitment to excellence.





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*The Certification in Public Health certification fits with our organization's goal of promoting and supporting a strong, prepared, and motivated public health workforce for Colorado. The CPH certification exam covers the core public health services and capabilities provided by our public health system and, at the same time, provides individuals with an opportunity to grow professionally.*

– Pamela Gould, MPH, CPH, Colorado Office of Public Health Practice, Planning, and Local Partnerships



# Become an NBPHE Partner

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The NBPHE has partnerships with many [organizations](#) interested in getting their employees Certified in Public Health, and we would love to partner with you! Contact us at [info@nbphe.org](mailto:info@nbphe.org) to learn more about the benefits of partnering with NBPHE.

Partnerships can be customized to meet your needs. Examples include:

- Group discounts on exam fees
- In-person or virtual review sessions
- Development of customized training plans
- Study guides and practice exams
- Access to peers with the CPH to speak about the certification process
- Promotional and motivational materials

NBPHE is committed to broadening its certification offerings to address the workforce's needs. In 2025, we will launch a new Certified in Disease Intervention (CDI) certification with support through a cooperative agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additionally, we are exploring certifications for public health nurses and foundational public health roles, ensuring that professionals at all levels can grow in their public health practice. By partnering with NBPHE, your organization can build a more skilled, prepared, and resilient workforce.







# Ready to Start Your CPH Program?

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Once your organization determines its interest in promoting the CPH credential for your employees, you can follow the steps below to work through the planning and preparation process. During each of the three steps in the process, there are key action steps you can take and prompting questions to help you make important decisions along the way. We at NBPHE are available to support you throughout the process and will do everything possible to give you the tools to be successful. Have questions about offering the CPH? Contact us at [info@nbphe.org](mailto:info@nbphe.org) to receive assistance.

# STEP ONE

## Planning (months 1 - 3)

It can take between one to three months for organizations to complete the planning phase of the process. During the planning phase, you will need to obtain the support of your leadership to ensure that your organization is committed to offering the opportunity to become certified to your employees. Organizations should consider the value and sustainability of promoting the CPH for employees.

### Action Steps

- ☑ Obtain leadership support
- ☑ Identify funding source
- ☑ Determine the scale/scope of the offering
- ☑ Develop policies and procedures

### Decision Points

There are several key considerations during the planning phase of the process that can help determine the path forward and make the process as smooth as possible. Once your organization works through these decisions, policies and procedures can be created to outline the details of the program.

- **Who will pay for the exam (organization or candidate)?** In some settings, it may be feasible for the organization to cover all or some of the cost of the exam, while in others, the candidate may be asked to pay the fee. Employers such as health departments or community-based organizations may want to offer the CPH as a workforce development activity as resources permit. Developing clear criteria for covering the costs early in the process will help during later steps of the process.
- **What funding source(s) can be used?** Identifying a funding source early in the process will aid with obtaining the necessary approvals and ensure that the cost of the CPH exam is within your budget. Organizations can consider using workforce development, training, or other grant funds to offer the CPH to their employees. Certification may be an allowable expense for the use of carry-over funds for recipients of Federal funds.
- **Will the exam be mandatory or voluntary?** Decide early in the process whether the exam will be a requirement or if it will be optional.

- **Which roles in your organization should be certified?** Based on a review of the core competencies and your organization's goals, you can determine which employees should be offered the opportunity to obtain the CPH credential. Reviewing daily job tasks or position descriptions to make this decision can be helpful.
- **Will certification result in a pay differential, preferential hiring, or promotional opportunities?** There are many benefits for public health professionals who want to obtain the CPH. Considering whether to establish additional incentives or benefits for your employees may help them feel more invested in the process.
- **Does your organization have employee unions with agreements or incentives that should be considered?** Unions often offer incentives for professional development and training. There may also be agreements in place that could impact participation in the CPH program.

### What support can employers provide to candidates during Step One – Planning?

- **Generate Interest:** Emailing and posting information about the new program and hosting informational webinars can generate interest and get employees excited about the opportunity to earn the CPH credential.
- **Communicate:** Provide clear messages to employees about the benefits of becoming certified, expectations of the program, and how they will be supported to complete the process.
- **Facilitate Success:** Employers can offer a learning style assessment or other tools to help employees develop an individualized study plan.

### How will NBPHE support you during Step 1 - Planning?

NBPHE is ready to support you in offering the CPH to your employees. During the planning phase of the process, NBPHE staff can meet with you routinely to discuss your progress and help you through the process. NBPHE can connect you with similar organizations so you can learn from their experiences, and you can attend our quarterly Community of Practice calls to communicate with organizations that are also working towards implementing a CPH program. In addition, NBPHE staff can collaborate with your organization to host informational webinars for employees interested in becoming certified. NBPHE can negotiate discounts on exam fees based on your organization's level of participation and provide documentation needed to support procurement and payment processes.



# STEP TWO

## Preparation (months 4 - 6)

During step two of the process, organizations will prepare for their employees to obtain the CPH credential. Review the [eligibility criteria](#) as you consider who should take the CPH exam. Eligibility must be verified through an [application](#) process. Once your organization determines which employees should participate in the CPH program, candidates may need up to three months to prepare for the exam. The amount of time required to prepare varies based on education and experience, but candidates can typically prepare in three months. If you have questions about eligibility, you can contact us at [info@nbphe.org](mailto:info@nbphe.org).

### Action Steps

- ☑ Identify candidates
- ☑ Determine [eligibility](#) of designated employees
- ☑ Review [Candidate Handbook](#) for overview of exam policies & procedures
- ☑ Candidates begin exam preparation

### Decision Points

- **Who will be certified?** This is the time to decide which employees should obtain the CPH credential. Working with program leaders to develop a list of names of potential candidates will help you estimate the cost and manage the enrollment process.
- **How many employees can be certified based on cost?** Once a funding source has been identified, you can determine how many people can be certified during your current and future budget periods.
- **How often will your organization offer the certification program (e.g., annually, bi-annually)?** This will largely depend on budget, hiring practices, and prioritization of key roles within your organization for certification.
- **Will your organization help candidates prepare (e.g., host review sessions or study groups)?** Some organizations work directly with NBPHE to offer review sessions and other exam preparation activities to their employees, while others rely on the events offered by NBPHE. Deciding whether to tailor the preparation process to your organization's needs will assist with the preparation process.
- **Can preparation occur during work time?** If your organization is offering a CPH program to employees, you may want to consider allowing them to attend review sessions and study for a limited number of hours each week/month. Creating space during the workday for exam preparation will help improve the outcome for your employees.

## What support can employers provide to candidates during Step 2– Preparation?

- **Formalize Participation:** Employers may choose to have a formal application and enrollment process for employer-sponsored CPH programs. Employers can consider requiring employees to sign an agreement to participate in the program with clear language about any potential consequences for not completing the process. This can give candidates a sense of ownership and improve exam completion.
- **Provide Study Opportunities:** Consider offering group study sessions, tailored review sessions, or recorded review session watch parties to facilitate connection among employees working towards certification.
- **Make it Fun:** Find ways to get employees excited about preparing for the exam. You can have contests, track group progress, or hold discussions to allow candidates to share what they are learning as they prepare.

## How will NBPHE support you during Step 2 - Preparation?

NBPHE is committed to helping your organization prepare to offer the CPH credential to your employees. NBPHE can share talking points and communications resources to help you create tailored messaging for your employees. NBPHE also has a wealth of [resources](#) available to assist candidates as they prepare for the CPH exam, including:

- Study Checklist – Track your progress
- Study Tips – Tips on how to get started with studying
- Content Outline – Outline of the domain areas on the CPH exam
- Sample Exam Questions – Get a feel for the type of questions on the CPH exam
- Practice Exams – Test your knowledge of the domain areas with three different practice exams
- Personal Action Plan – Use the fillable Personal Action Plan to develop your own prep strategy

In addition to the resources available on our website, NBPHE offers a series of [review sessions](#) to help candidates improve their knowledge, skills, and confidence. The typical series contains eleven two-hour sessions over six weeks and will increase attendees' knowledge about the certification's content areas and their skills in applying them in practice. CPH-certified presenters review each domain's subject matter and practice questions during each session. At the end of the series, attendees can expect they will be able to identify the content areas where they need additional studying, describe study tips and resources to prepare for the exam, and discuss their approach to applying the knowledge learned to their practice and the exam.



# STEP THREE

## Certification (months 6-12+)

Now that you have made some important decisions and have a plan for promoting the CPH for your employees, it's time to work with them to apply to become certified. During the [application](#) process, NBPHE will verify eligibility for candidates. Candidates will access [CertCentral](#), the Public Health Certification Portal to apply to take the CPH exam either virtually or in person at a designated testing center, retake the CPH exam, track recertification credits, and renew their CPH Certification. Also, to review fees and discounts for the CPH exam, click [here](#).

If your organization plans to pay the CPH exam fee, you may be eligible for a discounted fee and can purchase vouchers to distribute to your candidates. Vouchers can be purchased from NBPHE at any time and do not have an expiration date.

### Action Steps

- ☑ Work with candidates to apply for the exam
- ☑ Track exam completion to ensure employee follow through
- ☑ Monitor exam results
- ☑ Identify proficiency gaps for future training opportunities
- ☑ Ensure recertification credits are maintained

### Decision Points

- **Will taking the exam be considered a work-related activity?** Offering the exam during work time may remove barriers to completing the exam and improve uptake. Your organization may also need to consider whether to reimburse candidates for mileage to/from the test center. If so, it may be helpful to ensure that funds are budgeted for mileage reimbursement.
- **What if candidates do not pass?** Your organization should consider what actions will be taken if a candidate does not pass the exam. This decision will be tied to decisions you made in previous steps about any incentives or benefits that are offered to CPH-certified employees.
- **Will the organization pay for re-testing?** There is a [fee](#) for retaking the CPH. It would be best to decide whether your organization or the candidate will cover the cost of re-testing.

- **Will the organization cover the costs of recertification?** CPHs must report at least 30 recertification credits within their 2-year [recertification](#) period and pay a fee for recertification. The organization or the Certificant can cover the payment of expenses associated with maintaining the CPH certification.
- **Can recertification activities occur during work time?** There are many options for finding [recertification credits](#), including relevant trainings, attendance at conferences, presentations, and participation in NBPHE activities. Your organization should determine whether participation in these activities can occur during work time or if the CPH must attend in their own time. Supporting participation in recertification activities can facilitate the completion of recertification requirements for your employees.

### What support can employers provide to candidates during Step Three – Certification?

- **Establish Deadlines:** Establishing a deadline for each of the steps in the process can improve exam completion. You can also consider creating cohorts or groups who complete the process together and take the exam on a designated date(s).
- **Provide Reminders:** Sending out frequent reminders will encourage employees to make time to complete the exam.
- **Celebrate:** As employees complete the exam, celebrate with them! Find small ways to acknowledge their effort, even if they do not pass the first time. Congratulating Certificants who obtain their CPH will create a supportive environment and help inspire others to earn the CPH credential.

### How will NBPHE support me during Step 3 – Certification?

NBPHE supports partners in a variety of ways to ensure that our partners benefit fully from their CPH program. With candidate consent, NBPHE can help our partners track their employees' progress by providing customized reports on a routine basis. NBPHE also offers [discounted rates](#) and vouchers to partners to facilitate the payment process. We strive to make recertification credits accessible and relevant by accepting credits for a broad array of activities related to public health practice. In addition, NBPHE offers recertification activities such as [Webinar Wednesdays](#) and the [CPH Book Club](#)

# Partner Agreement

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NBPHE celebrates our partnerships and honors organizations that are promoting public health certification. Organizations that accept discounted exam rates will have their logo featured on our web page and are invited to submit a testimonial sharing the benefits of promoting public health certification and the value of certification for the organization and its employees.

