



**Public Health**  
Prevent. Promote. Protect.

## Building Visibility for your Health Department through Branding

NACCHO developed a national identity for governmental public health departments to raise awareness of the value of governmental public health. This branding effort offers health departments an opportunity to have a common visual symbol and thematic message, which if used consistently and over time, should increase the visibility of your health department in your community.



### **Visual symbols used consistently over time helps build public awareness.**

Local governmental health departments, unlike police, fire and emergency response agencies, or non-profit organizations such as the Red Cross, have lacked a universally-known visual identity.

Every day, health department personnel go about their duties in a way that is invisible to the people in the communities where they work.

A universally-recognized visual symbol (logo) would let everyone who observes or uses health department personnel, facilities, vehicles, publications, community meetings, or any other public health activity know that their health department is on the job. A universally-recognized logo also has the potential to link the good work of your health department to health departments across the United States.



### **Frequent and prominent use of the logo helps show pride in the people and power of public health.**

Public health departments should be visible and understood by policy makers, community partners, potential funders, and the public. Adopting a consistent logo is one important way to achieve that goal.

### **Logo and tagline use is entirely voluntary.**

An important part of achieving the ultimate goal of universal recognition for the logo is preserving uniformity. Many health departments have their own logos, but some do not.

The national identity can be used alone or in conjunction with a health department's existing identity. See NACCHO's guidelines for use at [www.naccho.org/phbrand](http://www.naccho.org/phbrand).

# Frequently Asked Questions

## What is the national identity for public health departments?

The national identity for public health departments comprises visual symbol (logo) and a carefully chosen thematic message that immediately and consistently identifies the people and work of public health departments throughout the United States.

## Why was the national identity for public health departments developed?

The National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), a nonprofit membership organization representing local health departments throughout the United States, created the national identity to help increase the visibility of local health departments, and broaden the public's understanding about the role of local health departments and how their work benefits both individuals and the community-at-large. State health departments are encouraged to adopt the national identity. Over time, use of this recognizable symbol should reassure people in the community that their public health department is working for their health and safety.

## What does the logo mean and why did you choose those colors?

The logo has three aspects: a three-sided blue shield; a stylized "plus" sign on a khaki background; and the words "Prevent. Promote. Protect."

**The shield.** The shield is a symbol that illustrates health, protection, and growth. The three point symmetry reinforces the three core functions of public health that are conveyed in the theme line: *Prevent. Promote. Protect.* We believe this simple, elegant statement conveys what public health does – and what local health departments achieve. It also differentiates health departments as both a sentinel and responder. Like police and fire, the shape is also clearly distinctive in silhouette.

**The stylized "plus".** Consistent with the three curved sides of the shield, the three prongs represent the three core functions of public health – assessment, assurance and policy development. The stylized "plus" symbol is also reminiscent of the universally-recognized Red Cross symbol which is firmly associated with health in the public's mind.

Over the years, the stylized "plus" sign has been interpreted several ways. Some see a stylized human figure with arms outstretched in a benevolent gesture. Others see in the prongs pointing upward and outward as a representation of our common aspiration to improve the health of all. Still others see a tree which is a universal symbol of life. None of these interpretations are wrong because the symbol is an abstraction (like the Nike "swoosh") and lends itself to many interpretations.

**The colors.** NACCHO chose navy blue and khaki, the same colors used in U.S. Public Health Service uniforms. These neutral colors prevent clashing with other health department logos, should a health department want to use two logos together.

## Who can use the logo?

NACCHO created the logo to identify and distinguish governmental public health, which has unique legal responsibilities and authorities. NACCHO encourages all governmental public health departments to use the logo. It is a free tool and can be used as an agency's primary logo or alongside existing logos. Broader use by private or non-profit entities, though they may be part of the public health system, is not permitted.

## Where can I find more information about the health department brand?

Learn more about the brand and get started with the tools available at [www.naccho.org/phbrand](http://www.naccho.org/phbrand)



**For general questions about using the health department logo, contact:**

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