

***DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY
NATIONAL
2014 PROFILE REPORT***

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM
Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth
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OVERVIEW

In June 2015, 197 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. One hundred and ten questionnaires were returned.

The *Profile* serves several important functions. The composite data provides information on broad NFP programmatic trends which enables the NFP Program staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to develop strategies and resources that support local efforts. It also facilitates the consultation of USCCB NFP Program staff with diocesan NFP coordinators. And, since the *Profile* provides individual portraits of diocesan NFP ministry, it is an excellent tool for diocesan staff to annually capture their own information and statistics to compare with national NFP trends.

The annual Profile Report reveals that some dioceses have made great strides to integrate NFP into all educational efforts on human sexuality, marriage, and family life. At the same time, there exist significant gaps in NFP efforts across the country. Given the range of pastoral circumstances from one diocese to another, NFP programs continue to vary in availability, viability, and effectiveness. The reasons for the unevenness are complex. In many cases, as one diocese improves its NFP program, another diocesan program is impacted adversely due to teacher loss, budget cuts, and/or diocesan restructuring. It is notable that some smaller dioceses have much larger programs with more limited resources than dioceses of much greater size and resources. Over the years of conducting this survey it is consistently clear that the most dramatic improvements and sustained growth in individual NFP diocesan programs occur when the diocesan bishop gives visible public support, is engaged in review and direction of program goals and objectives, and regularly encourages NFP efforts.

The following 2014 *Profile* summary of responses to certain key questions describes the current state of diocesan NFP ministry throughout the United States.

SUMMARY

1. Funding

Inadequate funding remains a stumbling block to successful diocesan NFP programs. Nationally, diocesan NFP programs remain largely underfunded. Fifty-six of the dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs. Sixty-six NFP diocesan programs surveyed operate on less than \$10,000 per year. Only a few diocesan budgets (22) exceed \$30,000. A modest amount of funds are collected from other sources such as the sale of NFP materials, course instruction, and follow-up fees.

2. Diocesan Budgets and NFP Ministry

In most dioceses, NFP programs are invisible in the budget. Just over a third (33%) of diocesan NFP programs submit an annual report of their activities to their bishop. Rarely is NFP funding identified as a specific line item in diocesan budgets.

3. Diocesan NFP Program Administration

In most dioceses, NFP programs operate under an umbrella department (e.g., Marriage and Family Life Office), where they share funding, materials, and staff. Most dioceses rely on part-time paid NFP staff. Only eight dioceses reported a full-time paid NFP coordinator. The majority of diocesan NFP programs depend on volunteer NFP teachers to sustain their programs (83%). Of the reporting dioceses, only a quarter (26%) give a modest stipend to teachers to cover personal costs such as transportation, baby sitters, materials, etc.

4. Couples Taught

The majority of dioceses include NFP in their marriage preparation guidelines. Theoretically, most engaged couples should have gained a basic understanding of both Church teaching and the moral acceptability/benefits of NFP methods. One might assume that couples would choose to pursue a full course of NFP instruction. In reality, most newly married couples fail to take a course. This assumption is strongly suggested when the number of marriages in the Church (151,364¹) are compared with the number of individuals (19,433²) that took a class in NFP in 2014. (In a culture wherein the very nature of marriage and the two-fold meaning of the conjugal act, love and life, have been ruptured, a renewed national effort is needed to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church's beautiful teaching on human sexuality within marriage.)

5. Marriage Preparation and NFP

The majority of diocesan marriage preparation programs make some effort to provide basic NFP information (e.g., booklets, fact-sheets, witness couple talks and NFP course instruction). The amount of time devoted to the discussions of NFP varies widely (ranging from 16 minutes to one hour for the majority of respondents).

6. Requiring NFP in Marriage Preparation

Fifteen dioceses require engaged couples to take a full NFP course of instruction before marriage. This is a relatively small number, but just a few years ago no diocese required a full course of NFP instruction as part of their marriage preparation efforts. Twenty-eight reporting dioceses are now exploring requiring NFP before marriage.³ This seems to be a

¹ *The Official Catholic Directory 2015.*

² See, *2014 Profile Report*, Q.23.

³ See, *Profile Report*, Q.31 and *Requiring a Full Course of NFP Instruction in Marriage Preparation—a Report* (September 2008) available at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/diocesan-ministry/upload/report-marriage-prep.pdf>. See also the updated report at: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/diocesan-ministry/upload/Report-Requiring-NFP-in-Marriage-Prep-2014.pdf>.

developing national trend. Anecdotal comments suggest that more individual priests are including a full course of NFP education as part of their parish marriage preparation programs, even if not required by their diocese.

CONCLUSION

Since 1990, this *Diocesan NFP Profile Report* has identified some positive national advances—notably moving NFP education from the periphery into the heart of diocesan marriage ministry. As stated previously, nationally there is a great need to substantially integrate within all levels of catechesis a deeper understanding of Church teaching on human sexuality to enable the faithful to embrace God’s vision for married love. The majority of couples preparing for marriage, and married couples themselves, do not typically grasp how the modern methods of NFP support God’s plan for married love. They continue not to understand why the Church teaches that contraceptive family planning is morally wrong. The Church’s teaching on human sexuality, marriage, conjugal love, and responsible parenthood is largely unknown.

Finally, when evaluating any diocesan NFP program, the most important pastoral leadership question can be summed up with a simple “yes” or “no”:

Can couples who wish to be faithful to Church teaching on conjugal love and responsible parenthood readily get the NFP support they need?

The answer to this question will determine how best to plan and support local diocesan NFP ministry.

I PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1) The diocesan NFP Ministry is: (*check one*)

- 87% Part of the office of Marriage and Family Life
- 1% A service of one of our Catholic hospital(s)
- 5% Part of Catholic Charities
- 7% Its own department

N=91

2) Who is responsible for coordinating NFP Ministry? (*e.g., Family Life Director, NFP Coordinator, Respect Life Director, etc.*)

- 51% Diocesan NFP Coordinator
- 40% Family Life Director
- 4% Respect Life Director
- 4% No person designated

N=92

How long have you been the NFP coordinator?

The average coordinators have held the position for 8 years with a combined 827 years of experience.

N=103

3) For this position, NFP work is: (*check one*)

- 44% Part of full-time responsibilities
- 12% Full-time, paid
- 2% Full-time, volunteer
- 29% Part-time, paid
- 13% Part-time, volunteer

N=103

4) Is the NFP coordinator trained in NFP methodology? (*Check one*)

76% Yes 24% No

N=105

5) If the answer to question (4) is “Yes,” for which of the following roles was the NFP coordinator trained? (*Check all that apply*)

(*Frequency*)

53 Teacher 74 User 49 Promoter

N=87

- 6) If a teacher, how long has the person been teaching?

Average Number: 15 years

N=55

- 7) If you answered question (5), please indicate which school(s) of NFP trained the coordinator? (*Check all that apply*)

(*Frequency*)

- 19 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 25 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*TM Center
- 08 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 29 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 03 Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
- 11 Northwest Family Services

N=75

- 8) Which statement best describes the NFP program policy regarding remuneration of its teachers? (*Check one*)

- 56% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.
- 26% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.
- 6% We pay our NFP instructors (*part and/or full time*).
- 13% Salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*).

N=105

- 9) How many NFP teachers are part of the diocesan program? (*Count couples as two*)

Total number of teachers: 1,761

N=104

The average number of teachers: 17

- 10) Which organization trains the diocesan teachers? (*Check all that apply*)

(*Frequency*)

- 58 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 77 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 73 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*TM Center
- 23 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 13 Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
- 19 Northwest Family Services

N=104

11) Does the diocese have an NFP Advisory Committee?
24% Yes 76% No N=110

12) Do you prepare an annual diocesan report on NFP ministry?
33% Yes 67% No N=108

II PROGRAM BUDGET

13) What was the total operating budget for NFP ministry last year? (*Estimate should include salaries, stipends, postage, materials, etc.*)

Frequency

14	\$0	
22	\$1 - 999	
20	\$1,000 - 4,999	
10	\$5,000 - 9,999	
18	\$10,000 - 29,999	
08	\$30,000 - 49,999	
11	\$50,000 - 69,999	
03	\$70,000+	N=106

14) Of the total operating budget for NFP ministry, how much was directly funded by the diocese last year?

Frequency

17	\$0	
22	\$1 - 999	
25	\$1,000 - 4,999	
07	\$5 - 9,999	
16	\$10 - 29,999	
08	\$30 - 49,999	
06	\$50 - 69,999	
02	\$70+	N=103

- 15) How much additional money was generated by all NFP activities? (e.g., introductory sessions, class fees, seminars, materials, etc.).

Frequency

47	\$0	
18	\$1- 999	
21	\$1,000 - 4,999	
6	\$5,000 - 9,999	
9	\$10,000>	N=101

- 16) Is there a separate fee for an introductory session? (*Check one*)

35% Yes 65% No N=95

Comment: The average fee for an introductory session is less than \$50.00. The amount charged varied from a low of \$6.00 to a high of \$50+ depending on materials and length of the introductory session(s).

N=34

- 17) Is there a charge or a fee for a full course in NFP? (*Check one*)

91% Yes 9% No N=102

- 18) If the answer to question (17) is “Yes,” how is a separate fee determined for a full course in NFP? (*Check one*)

22% Diocesan NFP staff determines fees
 61% Individual NFP provider determines fees
 17% Combination of diocesan staff and individual NFP provider determine fees

N=93

- 19) How much is charged to clients/couples for a full course in NFP?

3%	\$0	
2%	\$1 - 25	
8%	\$26 - 45	
9%	\$46 - 65	
10%	\$66 - 85	
7%	\$86 - 99	
61%	\$100>	N=90

Comment: Most fees vary from \$46 to over \$100+, depending on materials, length of course, and the number of follow-up services required.

- 20) Is a separate fee charged for follow-up? (*Check one*)
- 38% Yes 62% No N=92

Comment: The average charge for a follow-up session was less than \$45.

N=35

III PROGRAM SERVICE

- 21) Which NFP method(s) is currently taught in the diocesan program? (*Check all that apply*)

(*Frequency*)

86	Cervical Mucus Method	
16	Sympto-Hormonal	
86	Sympto-Thermal Method	
8	Other	N=103

- 22) How many individuals (couples count as two) in the diocese received an introductory/promotional talk on NFP during the last twelve months?
- More than 74,697 individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.
- N=96

- 23) How many individuals (couples count as two) in the diocese attended NFP class/instruction during the last twelve months?
- More than 19,433 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP. N=92

- 24) Does the diocese have guidelines for marriage preparation?
- 96% Yes 4% No N=107

- 25) If the answer to question (24) was “Yes,” is NFP included in the guidelines for marriage preparation?
- 89% Yes 11% No N=105

- 26) On average how much time is allowed for NFP education in marriage preparation programs? (*Give your best estimate*)
- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|-------|
| 4% | 0 minutes - 15 minutes | |
| 22% | 16 minutes - 30 minutes | |
| 21% | 31 minutes - 45 minutes | |
| 20% | 46 minutes - 1 hour | |
| 33% | 1 hour - 2 hours+ | N=105 |
- 27) Does the (arch)diocese require an introductory session to NFP for the engaged? (*Check one*)
- | | | |
|---------|--------|-------|
| 46% Yes | 54% No | N=107 |
|---------|--------|-------|
- 28) If the answer to question (27) is “Yes,” how much time is allotted to the required NFP introductory session?
- | | | |
|-----|------------------|------|
| 20% | 30 minutes | |
| 18% | 45 minutes | |
| 62% | 1 hour - 2 hours | N=50 |
- 29) If the answer to question (27) is “Yes,” what is the content of the required NFP introductory session? (*Check all that apply*)
- (*Frequency*)
- | | | |
|----|---|------|
| 65 | The appropriate Church teachings | |
| 39 | Reproductive anatomy & physiology | |
| 53 | Basic NFP science (e.g., <i>all the signs of fertility discussed</i>) | |
| 48 | Basic NFP methodology (e.g., an overview of all the specific NFP systems offered in your diocese) | |
| 71 | Benefits of NFP | |
| 47 | Contraindications of various contraceptives | |
| 56 | NFP witness talk | N=73 |
- 30) Does the diocese require an NFP *full course* for engaged couples? (*Check one*)
- | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|
| 14 Yes | 96 No | N=110 |
|--------|-------|-------|
- 31) Is the diocese moving toward mandating a full course of NFP instruction for engaged couples?
- | | | |
|--------|-------|-------|
| 28 Yes | 72 No | N=100 |
|--------|-------|-------|

**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses
for participating in the 2014 Profile Report**

Alexandria, Allentown, Anchorage, Atlanta, Arlington, Belleville, Birmingham, Bismarck, Boston, Boise, Brooklyn, Brownsville, Buffalo, Burlington, Camden, Charleston, Charlotte, Cheyenne, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Colorado Springs, Columbus, Corpus Christi, Covington, Crookston, Denver, Detroit, Dodge City, El Paso, Erie, Evansville, Fargo, Ft. Wayne - South Bend, Ft. Worth, Galveston–Houston, Gary, Gaylord, Grand Island, Green Bay, Greensburg, Honolulu, Indianapolis, Joliet, Kalamazoo, La Crosse, Lafayette (IN), Lafayette (LA), Lansing, Laredo, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Lincoln, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Louisville, Madison, Memphis, Metuchen, Mobile, Nashville, New Orleans, New York, Newark, Norwich, Ogdensburg, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Orange, Orlando, Palm Beach, Paterson, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland (ME), Portland (OR), Raleigh, Rapid City, Reno, Richmond, Rochester, Rockford, Rockville Ctr., Sacramento, Saginaw, Salina, Salt Lake City, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Savannah, Seattle, Shreveport, Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Spokane, Springfield (IL), Springfield (MA), St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Steubenville, Trenton, Venice, Wichita, Winona, and Worcester.

Program Resources

The following documents are useful in strengthening diocesan NFP programs.

Diocesan Plan for Natural Family Planning Program Development. Washington, DC: Diocesan Development Program for NFP, 1981. (Available online at <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/diocesan-ministry/upload/Diocesan-Plan.pdf> and from the Respect Life Catalogue, orders, 1-866-582-0943.)

Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 2010. (Available at: <http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/diocesan-ministry/standards.cfm><http://www.usccb.org/issues-and-action/marriage-and-family/natural-family-planning/diocesan-ministry/standards.cfm>)

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