

***DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY
NATIONAL
2008 PROFILE REPORT***

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM
Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
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OVERVIEW

In January 2009, 196 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. Seventy-nine (40%) dioceses submitted data. The accumulated data serves two functions. It provides individual portraits of diocesan NFP ministry and it assists the NFP Program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to analyze broad NFP programmatic trends across the United States. As in previous years, the following data “snapshot” indicates that NFP ministry varies widely; however, when diocesan bishops give focused attention and support to NFP ministry, it becomes strong and effective.

- When viewed nationally in 2008, diocesan NFP ministry fluctuates from robust to anemic. Some dioceses have very strong educational programs that integrate NFP into all educational efforts on human sexuality, marriage and family life. Dioceses continue to improve the quality of their NFP programs in order to meet the *Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry*. But, as one diocese improves its NFP program, another diocese experiences a reduction in program vitality due to teacher loss, budget cuts, and/or diocesan restructuring.

- The majority of dioceses include NFP in their marriage preparation guidelines (87%). At first glance, this information is encouraging. When, however, the total number of marriages in the Church (196,420¹) is compared to the total number of individuals (13,655²) that took part in a class of NFP instruction, it could be strongly inferred that less than 7% have taken the necessary steps to use NFP in their marriages. Given the fact that the latest data from the National Survey of Family Growth³ regarding current use of NFP among all U.S. women of reproductive age is only 0.2%,⁴ this suggests that currently most Catholic married couples are not using NFP. Thus the results from the *Profile* study seem to indicate that most newly married couples in the Church more than likely fail to take full advantage of NFP in their conjugal life. In a culture wherein the two-fold meaning of the conjugal act, love and life, has been severed by an acceptance of

¹ *U.S. Catholic Directory* (2008).

² See, *2008 Profile Report*, Q.22.

³ The National Survey of Family Growth (NSFG) is conducted by the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS), with the participation and funding support of nine other programs of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). This is an on-going survey of the U.S. population. The purpose of the NSFG is to gather information on family life, marriage and divorce, pregnancy, infertility, use of contraception, and men's and women's health.

⁴ The current data of the NSFG is from the 2002, Cycle VI report available at:
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/abc_list.htm The data on NFP is at:
http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nsfg/abc_list_n.htm#natural

contraception, much more must be done to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church's beautiful teaching on human sexuality and the transmission of life.

- Seven dioceses and increasing numbers of individual priests/parishes require engaged couples to take a full NFP course of instruction before marriage. It is still too early to tell if this is a national trend. Based on *Profile* respondent comments and inquiries to the *NFP Program of the Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth*, more dioceses are requiring an introduction or even a full NFP course of instruction as part of their marriage preparation policies.⁵
- Most diocesan marriage preparation programs make some effort to provide basic NFP information to various groups, with special attention directed toward couples preparing for marriage, e.g., booklets, fact-sheets, witness couple talks and NFP course instruction.
- Adequate funding remains the greatest stumbling block to successful diocesan NFP programs. Nationally, diocesan funding for NFP programs is meager at best. Forty percent of dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs. Fifty-one percent of all NFP diocesan programs operate on less than \$10,000 per year. Eleven percent of all diocesan programs spend over \$30,000.
- In the majority of dioceses, NFP programs share funding, materials, and staff support of an umbrella department, e.g., Marriage and Family Life Office. Most dioceses rely on part time paid staff. A few dioceses have full time paid NFP coordinators. The majority of diocesan NFP programs depend on volunteers to sustain their programs (85%). Of these, a little less than a third (33%) of the dioceses offer modest stipends to teachers to cover personal costs, e.g., transportation, baby-sitters, materials, etc.
- In most dioceses NFP efforts can appear to be “unnoticed.” Less than half (44%) of diocesan NFP programs are asked to submit an annual report of their activities. Often, NFP funding is so limited that it is not identified as a specific line item in diocesan budgets. To correct this problem, an annual diocesan NFP program report should be required and NFP funding identified in departmental budgets.

In conclusion, the basic pastoral question when examining diocesan NFP ministry is: *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 fundamental question will determine how best to plan and support local diocesan NFP ministry.

⁵See, *Requiring a Full Course of NFP Instruction in Marriage Preparation—a Report* (September 2008) available at: http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/report_requiring_%20NFP_%2008.pdf.

I PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1) The (arch)diocesan NFP Program is: *(check one)*

- 79% Part of the office of Marriage and Family Life
 - 0% A service of one of our Catholic hospital(s)
 - 4% Part of Catholic Charities
 - 1% Its own department
 - 16% Other
- N=75*

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

- 48% Diocesan NFP Coordinator
 - 36% Family Life Director
 - 4% Respect Life Director
 - 12% No person designated
- N=77*

How long have you been the NFP coordinator?

The person responsible for coordinating NFP ministry has held the position for an average of 9 years. The range is from 1 to over 30 years.

N=37

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

- 45% Part of full-time responsibilities
 - 5% Full-time, paid
 - 0% Full-time, volunteer
 - 41% Part-time, paid
 - 9% Part-time, volunteer
- N=76*

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

- 80% Yes
 - 20% No
- N=76*

- 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*)

33 Teacher 46 User 39 Promoter

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

(*Frequency*)

23 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
14 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
11 Smaller teaching programs or diocesan/regional programs
9 Creighton Model FertilityCare™ Center
6 Family of the Americas Foundation
5 Northwest Family Services

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

Total number of teachers: 992 *N=56*

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

53% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.
32% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.
8% Salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*).
7% We pay our NFP instructors (*part and/or full time*).

N=75

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

(*Frequency*)

54 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
43 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
18 Northwest Family Services
13 Creighton Model Fertility Care™ Center
9 Family of the Americas Foundation
0 Diocesan Teacher Training program

10) Does the (arch)diocese have an NFP Advisory Committee?
 30% Yes 70% No *N=77*

11) Do you prepare an annual diocesan report on NFP ministry?
 43% Yes 57% No *N=76*

II PROGRAM BUDGET

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

1%	\$0	
18%	\$1-999	
25%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
7%	\$5 - 9,999	
27%	\$10 - 29,999	
13%	\$30 - 49,999	
6%	\$50>	<i>N=71</i>

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

4%	\$0	
19%	\$1-999	
27%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
9%	\$5 - 9,999	
23%	\$10 - 29,999	
15%	\$30 - 49,999	
3%	\$50>	<i>N=74</i>

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

34%	0	
22%	1-999	
24%	1,000-4,999	
7%	5,000-9,999	
13%	10,000>	<i>N=76</i>

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

25% Yes 70% No 5% No Response *N=77*

Comment: The average fee for an introductory session is less than \$30.00. The amount charged varied from a low of \$5.00 to a high of \$50+ depending on materials and length of the introductory session(s). Most dioceses charge between \$11 and \$30.

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

88% Yes 12% No *N=75*

17) If the answer to question (16) is “Yes,” how is a separate fee determined for a full course in NFP? (*Check one*)

21% (Arch)diocese NFP staff determine fees
46% Individual NFP provider determines fees
19% Combination of (arch)diocesan staff and individual NFP provider determine fees
14% Other

N=72

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

5% \$0
6% \$1-25
1% \$26-45
15% \$46-65
18% \$66-85
14% \$86-99
41% \$100> *N=66*

Comment: Fees varied from \$25 to over \$100+, depending on materials, length of course, and the number of follow-up services required.

19) Is a separate fee charged for follow-up? (*Check one*)

20% Yes 80% No *N=74*

Comment: The average charge for a follow-up session was \$25. Ninety-five percent of clients were charged less than \$65.

N=16

III PROGRAM SERVICE

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

(*Frequency*)

69 Sympto-Thermal Method
60 Cervical Mucus Method

- 21) How many individuals (couples count as two) in the (arch)diocese received an introductory/promotional talk on NFP during the last twelve months?

More than 73,805 individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.
N=76

- 22) How many individuals (couples count as two) in the (arch)diocese attended NFP class/instruction during the last twelve months?

More than 13,655 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP. N=76

- 23) Does the (arch)diocese have guidelines for marriage preparation?

99% Yes 1% No N=77

- 24) If the answer to question (23) was “Yes” is NFP included in the guidelines for marriage preparation?

87% Yes 13% No N=75

- 25) On average how much time is allowed for NFP education in marriage preparation programs? (*Give your best estimate*)

12% 0 minutes - 15 minutes
22% 16 minutes - 30 minutes
25% 31 minutes - 45 minutes
21% 46 minutes - 1 hour
21% 1 hour - 2 hours+ N=77

- 26) Does the (arch)diocese require an introductory session to NFP for the engaged? (*Check one*)

33% Yes 67% No N=77

27) If the answer to question (26) is “Yes”, how much time is allotted to the required NFP introductory session?

10% 30 minutes

17% 45 minutes

52% 1 hour - 2 hours

21% Other: “one day NFP seminar,” etc.

N=29

28) If the answer to question (26) is “Yes”, what is the content of the required NFP introductory session? (*Check all that apply*)

(*Frequency*)

24 Benefits of NFP

23 The appropriate Church teaching

21 Basic NFP science (e.g., *all the signs of fertility discussed*)

20 NFP witness talk

19 Contraindications of various contraceptives

17 Reproductive anatomy & physiology

16 Basic NFP methodology (e.g., an overview of all the specific NFP systems offered in your diocese)

29) Does the (arch)diocese require an NFP *course* for engaged couples? (*Check one*)

8% Yes 92% No

N=75

30) Is the (arch)diocese moving toward mandating a full course of NFP instruction for engaged couples? (*Check one*)

11% Yes 89% No

N=72

**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses
for participating in the 2008 Profile Report**

Albany, Allentown, Altoona-Johnstown, Amarillo, Arlington, Atlanta, Baltimore, Bismarck, Boston, Bridgeport, Burlington, Camden, Charleston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Colorado Springs, Columbus, Corpus Christi, Denver, Detroit, Fall River, Fargo, Ft. Wayne-South Bend, Galveston-Houston, Great-Falls-Billings, Greensburg, Harrisburg, Hartford, Houma-Thibodaux, Joliet, Kalamazoo, Kansas City, Kansas City-St. Joseph, La Crosse, Lansing, Las Cruces, Lexington, Lincoln, Little Rock, Louisville, Marquette, Memphis, Miami, New Ulm, Oakland, Ogdensburg, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Palm Beach, Patterson, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Peoria, Phoenix, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Portland in Maine, Raleigh, Richmond, Rochester, Rockford, Rockville Centre, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, Savannah, Springfield in Illinois, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Superior, Syracuse, Toledo, Venice, Washington, DC, Wichita, Wilmington, Yakima.

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/prolife/issues/nfp/NFPDiocesanPlan—1981.pdf> and from the Secretariat for Pro-Life Activities; Orders, 1-866-582-0943.)

Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry. Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 2000. (Available at <http://www.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/standard.shtml>)

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