

**DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY**  
**NATIONAL 2023 PROFILE REPORT**

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM**  
**Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth**  
**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**  
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**DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY  
NATIONAL  
2023 PROFILE REPORT**

**OVERVIEW**

In January 2024, 196 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. Ninety-nine questionnaires, or fifty percent, completed the 2023 *Profile* survey. The number of diocesan participants offers a good picture of the current state of NFP efforts in the nation.

Since the creation of the *Profile*, it has served several important functions. Because the *Profile* provides individual portraits of the diocesan NFP ministry, it is a tool for diocesan staff to annually capture their local information/statistics that can then be compared to national trends. On a national level, the composite data provides a picture of diocesan NFP activity through describing broad programmatic trends in Natural Family Planning (NFP) ministry. This enables the NFP Program (NFPP) staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to monitor and develop appropriate strategies and supportive resources for the dioceses. For example, one such supportive resource is a monthly video meeting called “NFP Office Hours” hosted by the assistant director of the NFPP. The hour-long virtual meeting is designed for diocesan coordinators and their teachers to discuss relevant topics that impact NFP ministry. Guest speakers are taken from the national NFP community, the medical profession, and Catholic universities and seminaries. Some of the sessions are also open to national NFP leaders who support the dioceses.

Since 1990, the *Profile* has captured strides in diocesan efforts to integrate NFP into all pastoral educational efforts treating human sexuality, marriage, and family life. Inconsistencies remain a concern in diocesan NFP efforts across the country. NFP programs vary in availability and viability from diocese to diocese. The underlying reasons for the inconsistencies are complex. Frequently, as one diocese deepens its commitment to NFP educational efforts and financial support, another diocesan program is impacted adversely due to teacher loss, budget cuts, modest ecclesial support, and diocesan restructuring efforts. It is worth noting that some smaller dioceses have more robust NFP programs than dioceses of much greater sizes. The difference is due to the level of episcopal support, the talent of diocesan NFP staff (paid and volunteer), and whether a dedicated diocesan NFP budget exists. Over the years, a review of the data from this national survey demonstrates that diocesan NFP programs are robust when the bishop gives his full support—spiritually and financially—to the program; and when the ministry has staff who are competent, devoted, and creative in carrying out goals and objectives to strengthen diocesan NFP ministry.

Finally, when examining any diocesan NFP program, the ongoing crucial pastoral leadership question can be summed up with either 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 the local diocesan NFP ministry.

### **SUMMARY**

The following 2023 *Profile* summary of responses gives a broad view of diocesan NFP ministry efforts across the United States. Since 1990, this *Diocesan NFP Profile Report* has identified a few positive national advances. They include:

1. NFP education has moved from being seen as an optional component of diocesan marriage preparation to an integrated piece of the preparation.

Almost all dioceses have included some modest NFP education in their marriage preparation programs. Many dioceses have steadily increased the length of time and quality of materials offered to couples preparing for marriage. Among the 2023 responses, eighteen dioceses responded that they require a full course of NFP instruction in marriage preparation. Other dioceses that have not responded bring that number up to 22. This is a positive trend.

2. The diocesan administrative model for support of NFP programs continues to be sharing funding, materials, and staff from an umbrella department (most commonly, the Marriage and Family Life Office).

Sixty-four percent of the 2023 respondents stated that NFP ministry is part of other ministries that they oversee. Only five percent of the respondents have a full-time paid NFP coordinator. This trend negatively impacts NFP ministry. A ministry is more likely to quickly develop and thrive when one staff person is responsible for the one ministry.

3. Modest funding has been and continues to be a serious limitation in NFP efforts.

Nationally, diocesan NFP programs remain underfunded. Seventy-four percent of dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs—eighty percent of all NFP diocesan-funded programs operate on less than \$10,000 annually. A few diocesan budgets (8%) exceeded \$30,000.

Most Diocesan NFP programs rely on a mixture of indirect funding from other sources (e.g., sale of NFP materials, individual and parish donations, grants from local Knights of Columbus Councils, a fee for course instruction, and follow-up fees, etc.).

4. Although most dioceses provide an introduction to NFP to large numbers of individuals, the majority of individuals do not follow up and take a full course of NFP.

The moral implication of the individuals is clear: there is little understanding and acceptance of the nature of marriage and the two-fold meaning of the conjugal act (love and life). The modern mentality to separate sexual union from procreation with contraception is commonplace. In addition, the majority of modern people view contraception as “good medicine.” A renewed national effort is needed to educate, form, and inspire Catholic couples to fully understand and embrace the Church’s beautiful teaching on human sexuality, marriage and the moral regulation of births in marriage.

Looking forward, research must be done to understand the above disparity and adjust NFP programmatic efforts to meet this cultural challenge. One recent change has been the delivery of NFP resources via the internet. Partly due to the 2020 pandemic, major NFP providers and diocesan programs have adjusted their NFP efforts to deliver NFP instruction and associated informational resources online while continuing in-person instruction. This is a positive trend that continues to grow.

5. In programs of marriage preparation, most dioceses provide basic NFP information in a variety of ways and resources (e.g., NFP science and methodology talk, married couples’ witness stories, NFP course instruction, booklets, brochures, fact sheets, etc.). The amount of time devoted to the information about NFP varies significantly from a few minutes to over two hours.

## I. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

- 1) The diocesan NFP Program is: (*Check one*)
- 94% Part of the Office of Marriage and Family Life
  - 0% A service of one of our Catholic hospitals(s)
  - 0% Part of Catholic Charities
  - 6% Its own department
- N=80
- 2) Who is responsible for coordinating the NFP Ministry for the Diocese?
- 52% Family Life Director
  - 35% NFP Coordinator
  - 4% Respect Life Director
  - 9% No person designated
- N=79
- 3) For this position, NFP work is: (*Check one*)
- 64% A part of full-time responsibilities
  - 5% Full-time, paid
  - 1% Full-time volunteer
  - 18% Part-time, paid
  - 12% Part-time volunteer
- N=93
- 4) Is the NFP coordinator trained in NFP methodology? (*Check one*)
- 73% Yes      27% No
- N=95
- 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*)
- 37 Teacher    59 User    49 Promoter
- N=73
- 6) If you answered the question (5), please indicate which school(s) of NFP trained the coordinator: (*Check all that apply*)  
(*Frequency*)

- 12 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 0 Boston Cross-Check
- 27 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 33 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*<sup>TM</sup>
- 4 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 5 FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management; a Sympto-Hormonal method)
- 14 Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
- 13 Sympto-Pro (a Sympto-Thermal method provided by Northwest Family Services)

N=68

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

- 51% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.
- 18% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.
- 5% We pay our NFP instructors (*part-time or full-time*).
- 26% The salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*)

N=84

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

Total number of teachers: 1,053  
The average number of teachers: 12

N=90

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

(*Frequency*)

- 31 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 54 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 64 Creighton Model *Fertility Care*<sup>TM</sup>
- 10 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 21 FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management)
- 44 Marquette University Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
- 10 Northwest Family Services (Sympto-Pro)

N=76

## II. PROGRAM BUDGET

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

28%	\$0	
26%	\$1 - 999	
20%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
6%	\$5,000 - 9,999	
12%	\$10,000 - 29,999	
3%	\$30,000 - 49,999	
1%	\$50,000 - 69,999	
4%	\$70,000+	N=85

- 11) Do you charge a fee for a full course in NFP? (*Check one*)

63% Yes      37% No      N=75

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

15%	\$0	
4%	\$1 - 25	
4%	\$26 - 45	
97%	\$46 - 65	
2%	\$66 - 85	
11%	\$86 - 100	
57%	\$101+	N=54

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

## III. PROGRAM SERVICE

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

(*Frequency*)

39	Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)	
60	Couple to Couple League (CCL)	
64	Creighton Model <i>Fertility Care</i> <sup>TM</sup>	
11	Family of the Americas	
17	FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management; Sympto-Hormonal Method)	
47	Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Method)	
2	Standard Day Method (a calculation method)	
16	Sympto-Pro (a Sympto-Thermal method provided by Northwest Family Services)	
1	Two-Day Method (a cervical mucus-based method)	
8	Other	N=81

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

A total of 31,130 individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.

N=82

- 15) How many individuals (couples count as two) in the diocese attended a full course (both on-site and online or distance learning) in NFP during the last twelve months?

A total of 10,981 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP.

N=76

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

7% 0 minutes - 15 minutes

13% 16 minutes - 30 minutes

18% 31 minutes - 45 minutes

20% 46 minutes - 1 hour

42% 1 hour - 2 hours+

N=90

- 17) Does the diocese require a full *course* in NFP for engaged couples? (*Check one*)

18 Yes

76 No

N=94

Dioceses responding in the 2023 report that require NFP education in marriage preparation:

1. AR: Diocese of Little Rock
2. AZ: Diocese of Phoenix
3. CO: Diocese of Colorado Springs
4. FL: Diocese of St. Augustine
5. IN: Diocese of La Fayette
6. KS: Diocese of Wichita
7. MI: Diocese of Marquette
8. MS: Diocese of Springfield-Cape Girardeau
9. NC: Diocese of Charlotte
10. NE: Diocese of Grand Island
11. NM: Archdiocese of Santa Fe
12. OH: Diocese of Columbus
13. OH: Diocese of Steubenville
14. TN: Diocese of Knoxville
15. TX: Diocese of Amarillo
16. TX: Diocese of Dallas
17. TX: Diocese of Fort Worth
18. WI: Diocese of La Crosse



Missing from the above are the following dioceses that require a full course of NFP in marriage preparation but did not complete the 2023 survey:

19. Bismark
  20. Covington
  21. Denver
  22. Fargo
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**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses (99)  
for participating in the 2023 Profile Report**

**Albany, Altoona-Johnston, Allentown, Amarillo, Anchorage-Juneau, Archdiocese for the Military Services, Arlington, Atlanta, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Belleville, Birmingham, Boise, Boston, Charleston, Charlotte, Cheyenne, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Colorado Springs, Crookston, Dallas, Davenport, Des Moines, Detroit, Dodge City, Dubuque, Duluth, Erie, Evansville, Fort Worth, Gaylord, Grand Island, Grand Rapids, Great Falls-Billings, Harrisburg, Hartford, Houma-Thibodaux, Indianapolis, Jackson, Jefferson City, Joliet, Kalamazoo, Kansas City-St. Joseph, Knoxville, Lansing, Little Rock, La Crosse, Lafayette, IN, Los Angeles, Louisville, Madison, Marquette, Metuchen, Miami, Milwaukee, Monterey, Nashville, Norwich, Ogdensburg, Omaha, Orange, Orlando, Palm Beach, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Phoenix, Portland (ME), Pueblo, Raleigh, Reno, Richmond, Rochester, Rockford, Saginaw, Salina, San Antonio, San Francisco, Santa Fe, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul and Minneapolis, St. Petersburg, Savannah, Seattle, Springfield-Cape Girardeau, Steubenville, Superior, Syracuse, Tulsa, Tyler, Venice, Victoria, Washington, Wichita, Wilmington, Winona, Worcester**

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**Program Resources**

The following documents help strengthen diocesan NFP programs.

*Diocesan Plan for Natural Family Planning Program Development.* Washington, DC: Diocesan Development Program for NFP, 1981. (Available online at [www.usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/upload/Diocesan-Plan.pdf](http://www.usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/upload/Diocesan-Plan.pdf); 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 [usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/standards.cfm](http://usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/standards.cfm).)

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