

***DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY
NATIONAL
2012 PROFILE REPORT***

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

In April 2013, 178 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. One hundred and seventeen dioceses returned the *Profile* questionnaire. The use of a new web-based survey tool (Survey Monkey) resulted in the largest number diocesan participants since the *Profile* survey began in the fall of 1990.

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 to develop strategies and resources that support local NFP efforts. Because the *Profile* provides individual portraits of diocesan NFP ministry, it is an excellent tool for diocesan staff to annually capture their own information/statistics to compare with national NFP trends.

Particular 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 large 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 disparity 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. The most dramatic improvements and sustained growth in individual NFP diocesan programs occur when the diocesan bishop gives visible public support and regular encouragement to NFP efforts.

The following 2012 *Profile* summary of responses to certain key questions describes the current state of diocesan NFP ministry throughout the United States.

SUMMARY

1. Inadequate funding remains a stumbling block to successful diocesan NFP programs. Nationally, diocesan NFP programs remain largely underfunded. Fifty-eight percent of dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs. Sixty-eight percent of all NFP diocesan funded programs operate on less than \$10,000 per year. Only a few diocesan budgets (11%) exceed \$30,000. A modest amount of funds are collected from other sources, e.g., NFP materials, course instruction, and follow-up fees.

2. In most dioceses, NFP programs are invisible in the budget. Just over a third (35%) 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. In most 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 staffs. Only eight dioceses have a full-time paid NFP coordinator. The majority of diocesan NFP programs depend on volunteer NFP teachers to sustain their programs (83%). Of these dioceses, only a quarter (28%) give a modest stipend to teachers to cover personal costs, e.g., transportation, baby sitters, materials, etc.
4. The majority of dioceses include NFP in their marriage preparation guidelines (87%). However, in reality most newly married couples fail to take full advantage of NFP in their conjugal life. This assumption is strongly suggested when the number of marriages in the Church (163,976¹) is compared with the number of individuals (16,553²) that participated in a class and/or received instruction in NFP. In a culture where the very nature of marriage and the two-fold meaning of the conjugal act, love and life, have been ruptured, renewed national, diocesan, or parish efforts are needed to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church's beautiful teaching on human sexuality and conjugal love.
5. Eight 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-one dioceses are exploring requiring NFP before marriage.³ It is still too early to tell if this is a national trend. Anecdotal comments suggest that more and more individual priests are including a full course of NFP as part of their parish marriage preparation programs, even if not required by their diocese.
6. The majority of 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). The amount of time devoted to the discussions of NFP varies widely.
7. Only a handful of diocesan NFP programs (17%) have met the *Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry*. In the comment section of the *Profile* and from conversations with the staff of the NFP Program, it seems that a majority of diocesan NFP coordinators use the *Standards* as guidelines for strengthening their NFP efforts.

¹ *The Official Catholic Directory* 2013.

² See, *2012 Profile Report*, Q.22.

³ See, *Profile Report*, Q.30 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>.

CONCLUSION

Since 1990, this *Diocesan NFP Profile Report* has identified a few positive national advances—notably moving NFP education from the periphery into the heart of diocesan marriage preparation ministry. As stated previously, nationally, there is a great need to substantially integrate within all levels catechesis a more sophisticated understanding of human sexuality to enable the faithful to embrace God’s vision of human sexuality, marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood. Unfortunately, the majority of couples preparing for marriage and married couples themselves does not know Church teaching or grasp how the modern methods of NFP support God’s plan for married love. In addition, they do not understand why contraception is morally wrong. In pastoral programming it is critical, therefore, to help Catholics understand and accept the Church’s beautiful teachings on human sexuality, marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood.

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 Program is: (*check one*)

- 89.9% Part of the office of Marriage and Family Life
- 1.0% A service of one of our Catholic hospital(s)
- 3.0% Part of Catholic Charities
- 6.1% Its own department

N=99

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

- 50.5% Diocesan NFP Coordinator
- 43.4% Family Life Director
- 2.0% Respect Life Director
- 4% No person designated

N=99

How long have you been the NFP coordinator?

The range of experience is from 1 month to over 35 years. The majority of coordinators have held the position for 7.8 years.

N=109

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

- 51.3% Part of full-time responsibilities
 - 7.1% Full-time, paid
 - .9% Full-time, volunteer
- 26.5% Part-time, paid
- 14.2% Part-time, volunteer

N=113

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

85% Yes 15% No

N=113

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*)

44 Teacher 80 User 58 Promoter

N=98

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

(*Frequency*)

26	Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)	
27	Creighton Model <i>FertilityCare</i> TM Center	
7	Family of the Americas Foundation	
33	Couple to Couple League (CCL)	
10	Northwest Family Services	
3	Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)	
22	Smaller teaching programs or diocesan/regional programs	N=85

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

Total number of teachers: 1,552 N=111

The average number of years teaching: 14.6 N=56

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

55.4% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.

27.7% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.

3.6% We pay our NFP instructors (*part and/or full time*).

13.4% Salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*).

N=112

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

(*Frequency*)

54	Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)	
78	Couple to Couple League (CCL)	
72	Creighton Model <i>Fertility Care</i> TM Center	
23	Northwest Family Services	
22	Family of the Americas Foundation	
12	Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)	
22	Diocesan Teacher Training program	N=111

10) Does the diocese have an NFP Advisory Committee?

25.4% Yes 74.6% No N=114

11) Do you prepare an annual diocesan report on NFP ministry?

34.8% Yes 65.2% No

N=115

II PROGRAM BUDGET

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

15.6% \$0

13.8% \$1 - 999

24.8% \$1,000 - 4,999

8.3% \$5,000 - 9,999

20.2% \$10,000 - 29,999

7.3% \$30,000 - 49,999

5.5% \$50,000 - 69,999

4.6% \$70,000+

N=109

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

18.5% \$0

13.9% \$1 - 999

25.9% \$1,000 - 4,999

9.3% \$5 - 9,999

20.4% \$10 - 29,999

2.8% \$30 - 49,999

2.8% \$50>

N=108

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

43.8% \$0

21.9% \$1- 999

19.0% \$1,000 - 4,999

4.8% \$5,000 - 9,999

10.5% \$10,000>

N=105

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

32.7% Yes 67.3% No

N=104

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).

N=37

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

87.2% Yes 12.6% No

N=97

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

18.4% Diocesan NFP staff determines fees

61.2% Individual NFP provider determines fees

20.4% Combination of diocesan staff and individual NFP provider determine fees

N=98

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

6.1% \$0

1.0% \$1 - 25

6.1% \$26 - 45

13.3% \$46 - 65

9.2% \$66 - 85

9.2% \$86 - 99

55.1% \$100>

N=98

Comment: Most fees vary 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*)

25.2% Yes 74.8% No

N=103

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

N=25

III PROGRAM SERVICE

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

(*Frequency*)

93 Sympto-Thermal Method
92 Cervical Mucus Method
8 Sympto-Hormonal
6 Other

N=111

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

More than **102,912** individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.

N=97

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

More than **16,553** individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP.

N=92

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

93.9% Yes 6.1% No

N=107

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

87% Yes 13% No

N=108

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

7.3% 0 minutes - 15 minutes
18.2% 16 minutes - 30 minutes
25.5% 31 minutes - 45 minutes
16.4% 46 minutes - 1 hour
32.7% 1 hour - 2 hours+

N=110

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

44.7% Yes 55.3% No

N=114

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

13.7% 30 minutes
33.3% 45 minutes
52.9% 1 hour - 2 hours

N=51

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

(*Frequency*)

66 The appropriate Church teachings
49 Reproductive anatomy & physiology
65 Basic NFP science (e.g., *all the signs of fertility discussed*)
62 Basic NFP methodology (e.g., an overview of all the specific NFP systems offered in your diocese)
72 Benefits of NFP
50 Contraindications of various contraceptives
59 NFP witness talk

N=74

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

7% (8) Yes 92% (106) No

N=114

30) Is the diocese moving toward mandating a full course of NFP instruction for engaged couples?

20.4% (21) Yes 79% (82) No

N=103

**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses
for participating in the 2012 Profile Report**

Albany, Alexandria, Allentown, Altoona-Johnston, Anchorage, Atlanta, Arlington, Baker, Baltimore, Beaumont, Birmingham, Bismarck, Boise, Boston, Brooklyn, Brownsville, Buffalo, Burlington, Camden, Charleston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Colorado Springs, Columbus, Corpus Christi, Crookston, Des Moines, Detroit, El Paso, Erie, Fargo, Ft. Wayne-South Bend, Fort Worth, Galveston-Houston, Gary, Gaylord, Grand Island, Grand Rapids, Great Falls-Billings, Green Bay, Greensburg, Hartford, Honolulu, Houma-Thibodaux, Joliet, Juneau, Kalamazoo, Kansas City (KS), Kansas City-St. Joseph (MO), La Crosse, Lafayette in Indiana, Lake Charles, Lansing, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Lexington, Lincoln, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Louisville, Madison, Manchester, Memphis, Metuchen, Milwaukee, Nashville, New Orleans, Newark, Norwich, Ogdensburg, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Orlando, Owensboro, Palm Beach, Patterson, Peoria, Phoenix, Pittsburgh, Portland, Providence, Raleigh, Rapid City, Reno, Richmond, Rockford, Rockville Centre, Sacramento, Saginaw, Salina, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Francisco, San Jose, Santa Fe, Santa Rosa, Savannah, Seattle, Shreveport, Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Springfield (IL), St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Steubenville, Superior, Toledo, Trenton, Tulsa, Wheeling-Charleston, Wichita, Wilmington, 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://old.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/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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