

***DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY
NATIONAL
2011 PROFILE REPORT***

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

In January 2011, 178 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. One hundred dioceses returned the *Profile* questionnaire.

The collected data serves several functions. The *Profile* survey provides individual portraits of diocesan NFP ministry. This information enables the NFP Program staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to assist individual diocesan NFP coordinators in their efforts to strengthen their local programs. The *Profile* data also provides information on broad NFP programmatic trends. Understanding such national trends enables the NFP Program staff to develop wide-reaching resources and strategies that support the local NFP efforts.

As in previous years, the following 2011 report provides a “snapshot” of diocesan NFP ministry. The report indicates that NFP programs continue to vary in available resources, viability, and effectiveness. There is no significant change from the composite trends from 2000-2010. That said, the data reveals that the most dramatic improvements in individual NFP diocesan programs occur when the diocesan bishop gives visible public support and encouragement to NFP efforts.

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 exists a huge disparity in NFP efforts across the country. The reasons for this 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 small dioceses have large programs with more limited resources than dioceses of much greater size and resources.

SUMMARY

1. The majority of dioceses include NFP in their marriage preparation guidelines (98%). However, in reality most newly married couples fail to take full advantage of Natural Family Planning in their conjugal life. This assumption is strongly suggested when the number of marriages in the Church (170,172¹) are compared with the number of individuals (18,092²) that took a class/instruction in NFP. In a culture wherein the very nature of marriage and the two-fold meaning of the conjugal act, love and life, have been

¹ *The Official Catholic Directory 2011.*

² See, *2011 Profile Report, Q.22.*

rupted, a dedicated effort is needed to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church's beautiful teaching on human sexuality within marriage.

2. Nine dioceses require engaged couples to take a full NFP course of instruction before marriage. This is a small number, but more than just a few years ago no diocese required NFP education as part of marriage preparation. Other dioceses are exploring requiring NFP before marriage. It is still too early to tell if this is a national trend.

Based on *Profile* respondent comments and inquiries to the staff of the *NFP Program, Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth*, more dioceses are requiring an introduction as part of their marriage preparation policies.³ Anecdotal comments suggest that more and more individual priests are making a full course of NFP part of their parish marriage preparation programs, even if not required by their local diocese.

3. 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).
4. Sufficient funding remains a stumbling block to successful diocesan NFP programs. Nationally, diocesan NFP programs remain largely underfunded in comparison to the needs. Fifty-six percent of dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs. Seventy percent of all NFP diocesan programs operate on less than \$10,000 per year. Only a few diocesan budgets (12%) exceed \$30,000.
5. 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. A few dioceses have full-time, paid NFP coordinators. The majority of diocesan NFP programs depend on volunteer NFP teachers to sustain their programs (86%). Of these dioceses, only a quarter (25%) give a modest stipend to teachers to cover personal costs (e.g., transportation, baby sitters, materials, etc.).
6. In most dioceses, NFP programs are invisible in the budget. Less than a third (32%) 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.
7. Only a handful of diocesan NFP programs (16%) 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.

³ See, *Requiring a Full Course of NFP Instruction in Marriage Preparation—a Report* (September 2008) available at: http://www.old.usccb.org/prolife/issues/nfp/report_requiring_%20NFP_%202008.pdf.

Over the years, this *Diocesan NFP Profile Report* has revealed some national advances—notably moving NFP education from the periphery into the heart of diocesan marriage ministry. Despite these advances, there are still needs to address and improvements to be made. Many diocesan NFP programs continue to reveal low levels of institutional health, as indicated by a poor budget, lack of personnel and low numbers of couples enrolled in NFP classes, etc. Nationally speaking, improved catechesis is still a major need. The baptized continue to need help to understand and to embrace God’s vision of human sexuality, marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood. People need to be taught why the methods of NFP support God’s plan for married love. They do not typically understand why contraceptive behavior is morally wrong.

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)*

- 80% Part of the office of Marriage and Family Life
- 1% A service of one of our Catholic hospital(s)
- 2% Part of Catholic Charities
- 1% Its own department
- 16% Other N=96

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

- 44% Diocesan NFP Coordinator
- 34% Family Life Director
- 6% Respect Life Director
- 2% No person designated
- 14% Other 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 less than 10 years.

N=43

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

- 51% Part of full-time responsibilities
- 7% Full-time, paid
- 2% Full-time, volunteer
- 26% Part-time, paid
- 14% Part-time, volunteer N=99

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

82% Yes 18% No N=100

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)

43 Teacher 65 User 53 Promoter

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

(*Frequency*)

- 22 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 26 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*TM Center
- 8 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 33 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 11 Northwest Family Services
- 21 Smaller teaching programs or diocesan/regional programs

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

Total number of teachers: 1,126 N=62

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

- 61% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.
- 25% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.
- 5% We pay our NFP instructors (*part and/or full time*).
- 9% Salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*).

N=99

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

(*Frequency*)

- 70 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 61 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 20 Northwest Family Services
- 18 Creighton Model *Fertility Care*TM Center
- 16 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 11 Diocesan Teacher Training program

- 10) Does the diocese have an NFP Advisory Committee?

24% Yes 76% No N=100

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

32% Yes 68% No N=100

II PROGRAM BUDGET

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

10%	\$0	
18%	\$1 - 999	
26%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
14%	\$5 - 9,999	
16%	\$10 - 29,999	
9%	\$30 - 49,999	
7%	\$50>	N=95

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

10%	\$0	
21%	\$1 - 999	
25%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
14%	\$5 - 9,999	
18%	\$10 - 29,999	
9%	\$30 - 49,999	
3%	\$50>	N=97

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

44%	\$0	
21%	\$1- 999	
18%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
7%	\$5,000 - 9,999	
10%	\$10,000>	N=98

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

24% Yes 65% No 11% No Response N=100

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 or a fee for a full course in NFP? (*Check one*)

80% Yes 20% 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*)

- 19% Diocesan NFP staff determines fees
- 49% Individual NFP provider determines fees
- 22% Combination of diocesan staff and individual NFP provider determine fees
- 10% Other

N=83

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

- 1% \$0
- 1% \$1 - 25
- 10% \$26 - 45
- 19% \$46 - 65
- 5% \$66 - 85
- 11% \$86 - 99
- 53% \$100>

N=75

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*)

- 26% Yes
- 74% No

N=91

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

N=27

III PROGRAM SERVICE

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

(*Frequency*)

- 83 Sympto-Thermal Method
- 80 Cervical Mucus Method

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 115,756 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 13,382 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP. N=84
- 23) Does the diocese have guidelines for marriage preparation?
- 95% Yes 5% No N=100
- 24) If the answer to question (23) was “Yes” is NFP included in the guidelines for marriage preparation?
- 88% Yes 12% No N=96
- 25) On average how much time is allowed for NFP education in marriage preparation programs? (*Give your best estimate*)
- | | | |
|-----|-------------------------|------|
| 7% | 0 minutes - 15 minutes | |
| 17% | 16 minutes - 30 minutes | |
| 26% | 31 minutes - 45 minutes | |
| 25% | 46 minutes - 1 hour | |
| 25% | 1 hour - 2 hours+ | N=98 |
- 26) Does the (arch)diocese require an introductory session to NFP for the engaged? (*Check one*)
- 52% Yes 48% No N=99
- 27) If the answer to question (26) is “Yes”, how much time is allotted to the required NFP introductory session?
- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------------|------|
| 22% | 30 minutes | |
| 23% | 45 minutes | |
| 47% | 1 hour - 2 hours | |
| 8% | Other: “One day NFP seminar,” etc. | 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*)
- | | |
|----|---|
| 50 | The appropriate Church teachings |
| 29 | Reproductive anatomy & physiology |
| 43 | Basic NFP science (e.g., <i>all the signs of fertility discussed</i>) |
| 44 | Basic NFP methodology (e.g., an overview of all the specific NFP systems offered in your diocese) |
| 54 | Benefits of NFP |
| 36 | Contraindications of various contraceptives |

43 NFP witness talk

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

9% Yes 91% No *N=100*

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

21% Yes 79% No *N=92*

**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses
for participating in the 2011 Profile Report**

Albany, Alexandria, Allentown, Arlington, Baker, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Belleville, Bismarck, Boston, Brooklyn, Brownsville, Burlington, Charleston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cleveland, Colorado Springs, Columbus, Corpus Christi, Dallas, Denver, Des Moines, Detroit, Dodge City, Erie, Fargo, Ft. Wayne-South Bend, Fort Worth, Galveston-Houston, Gaylord, Grand Island, Greensburg, Hartford, Helena, Honolulu, Houma-Thibodaux, Jefferson City, Joliet, Kalamazoo, La Crosse, Lafayette in Indiana, Lake Charles, Lansing, Laredo, Lexington, Lincoln, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Louisville, Marquette, Memphis, Milwaukee, Nashville, New Ulm, Newark, Norwich, Oakland, Ogdensburg, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Orange, Orlando, Owensboro, Palm Beach, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Pittsburg, Providence, Raleigh, Rapid City, Reno, Richmond, Rockville Centre, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, San Antonio, San Diego, San Jose, Santa Rosa, Savannah, Seattle, Shreveport, Sioux City, Sioux Falls, Springfield in Illinois, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Steubenville, Stockton, Superior, Trenton, Tulsa, Tyler, Wheeling-Charleston, Winona, 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.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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