

***DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY
NATIONAL
2009 PROFILE REPORT***

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM
Secretariat for Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth
United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
Issued September 2010**

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OVERVIEW

In January 2010, **196** dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. **Seventy-seven** dioceses submitted data. The accumulated data serves several functions. The *Profile* provides individual portraits of diocesan NFP ministry through simple data collection. It assists the NFP Program of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to analyze broad NFP programmatic trends across the United States to guide planning efforts. As in previous years, the following data “snapshot” indicates that NFP programs vary widely and continue to reflect the composite trends from 2000-2009. The most dramatic improvements in individual NFP diocesan programs occur when the diocesan bishop gives visible public support and encouragement to NFP efforts.

When viewed nationally in 2009, diocesan NFP programs fluctuate from well-developed to non-existent. Some dioceses have strong educational programs that integrate NFP into all educational efforts on human sexuality, marriage and family life. 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. Only a handful of NFP programs meet the *Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry*.

- The majority of dioceses include NFP in their marriage preparation guidelines (86%). 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 total number of marriages in the Church (191,265¹) are compared with the total number of individuals (11,298²) that took a class/instruction in NFP. In a culture wherein the two fold meaning of the conjugal act, love and life, has been ruptured by a contraceptive culture, much more must be done to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church’s teaching on human sexuality within marriage.
- Seven dioceses require engaged couples to take a full NFP course of instruction before marriage. 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 *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.³

¹*The Official Catholic Directory 2009* (New Providence, NJ: P. J. Kenedy and Sons).

²See, *2009 Profile Report*, Q.22.

³See, *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. Please note that since the publication of this report, the Diocese of Amarillo no longer requires NFP classes while the Diocese of Covington does require NFP classes as part of marriage preparation.

- 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.
- Sufficient funding remains a major stumbling block to successful diocesan NFP programs. Nationally, diocesan funding for NFP programs is meager at best. Fifty-seven percent of dioceses surveyed directly budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs. Sixty-eight percent of all NFP diocesan programs operate on less than \$10,000 per year. Only a few diocesan budgets (14%) exceed \$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 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 (84%). Of these, roughly a third (33%) of the dioceses gives modest stipends to teachers to cover personal costs, e.g., transportation, baby sitters, materials, etc.
- In most dioceses NFP efforts can appear to go “unnoticed.” Less than half (43%) of diocesan NFP programs are asked to submit an annual report of their activities. Often, NFP funding is not identified as a specific line item in diocesan budgets. To correct this problem, an annual NFP program report should be produced and NFP funding identified in diocesan budgets.

As in previous years, when examining a diocesan NFP program, an important pastoral leadership question is summed up with this simple “yes” or “no” question: *Can couples who wish to be faithful to Church teaching on conjugal love and responsible parenthood readily get the NFP support they need?* In addition, many diocesan NFP coordinators comment in the survey that one more foundational pastoral question should be asked given the current culture of sexual permissiveness and a majority of engaged couples cohabiting before marriage: *How do we best catechize and spiritually form Catholic youth and young adults so that the virtue of chastity and life-long marriage are understood and embraced?* The answer to these basic questions will determine how to better plan and support local diocesan NFP ministry.

I PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

1) The diocesan NFP Program is: (*Check one*)

- 72% Part of the office of Marriage and Family Life
 - 1% A service of one of our Catholic hospital(s)
 - 3% Part of Catholic Charities
 - 4% Its own department
 - 20% Other
- N=74

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

- 41% Diocesan NFP Coordinator
 - 39% Family Life Director
 - 5% Respect Life Director
 - 1% No person designated
 - 13% Other
- N=75

How long have you been the NFP coordinator?

The person responsible for coordinating NFP ministry has held the position for an average of 7 years. The range of experience is from less 1 year to over 28 years.

N=34

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

- 48% Part of full-time responsibilities
 - 12% Full-time, paid
 - 0% Full-time, volunteer
 - 27% Part-time, paid
 - 13% Part-time, volunteer
- N=75

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

- 81% Yes
 - 19% No
- N=74

- 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*)

28 Teacher 49 User 40 Promoter

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

(*Frequency*)

12 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
11 Creighton Model FertilityCare™ Center
5 Family of the Americas Foundation
28 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
4 Northwest Family Services
11 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: 794 *N=48*

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

51% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.
33% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.
7% We pay our NFP instructors (*part and/or full time*).
10% Salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*).

N=73

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

(*Frequency*)

53 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
46 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
15 Northwest Family Services
13 Creighton Model Fertility Care™ Center
13 Family of the Americas Foundation
11 Diocesan Teacher Training program

10) Does the diocese have an NFP Advisory Committee?
27% Yes 73% No N=75

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.*)

7% \$0
14% \$1-999
30% \$1,000 - 4,999
11% \$5 - 9,999
21% \$10 - 29,999
6% \$30 - 49,999
10% \$50> N=70

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

12% \$0
15% \$1-999
30% \$1,000 - 4,999
11% \$5 - 9,999
18% \$10 - 29,999
10% \$30 - 49,999
4% \$50> N=73

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

41% 0
19% 1-999
18% 1,000-4,999
8% 5,000-9,999
15% 10,000> N=74

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

25% Yes 66% No 9% 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 \$6.00 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*)

89% Yes 11% 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*)

17% Diocesan NFP staff determines fees
55% Individual NFP provider determines fees
16% Combination of diocesan staff and individual NFP provider determine fees
12% Other

N=69

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

3% \$0
5% \$1-25
6% \$26-45
11% \$46-65
12% \$66-85
14% \$86-99
50% \$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*)

25% Yes 75% No *N=73*

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

N=17

III PROGRAM SERVICE

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

(*Frequency*)

64 Sympto-Thermal Method

60 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 68,242 individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.

N=73

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

More than 11,298 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP.

N=72

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

94% Yes 7% No

N=77

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

86% Yes 14% No

N=73

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

14% 0 minutes - 15 minutes

20% 16 minutes - 30 minutes

25% 31 minutes - 45 minutes

18% 46 minutes - 1 hour

23% 1 hour - 2 hours+

N=77

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

38% Yes 62% No

N=77

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

13% 30 minutes

20% 45 minutes

47% 1 hour - 2 hours

20% Other: “one day NFP seminar,” etc.

N=30

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

(*Frequency*)

25 The appropriate Church teachings

21 Reproductive anatomy and physiology

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

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

28 Benefits of NFP

21 Contraindications of various contraceptives

25 NFP witness talk

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

4% Yes 96% No

N=76

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

19% Yes 81% No

N=73

**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses
for participating in the 2009 Profile Report**

Albany, Allentown, Altoona-Johnstown, Arlington, Atlanta, Baker, Baltimore, Baton Rouge, Belleville, Bismarck, Bridgeport, Brooklyn, Camden, Charleston, Charlotte, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Corpus Christi, Denver, Detroit, Erie, Evansville, Fall River, Fargo, Ft. Wayne-South Bend, Grand Island, Great Falls-Billings, Greensburg, Hartford, Jefferson City, Joliet, La Crosse, Lake Charles, Lansing, Lincoln, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Madison, Manchester, Marquette, Memphis, Metuchen, Miami, Milwaukee, Mobile, New Ulm, New York, Oakland, Ogdensburg, Omaha, Orlando, Patterson, Peoria, Philadelphia, Rapid City, Richmond, Rockford, Rockville Centre, Sacramento, San Antonio, San Diego, San Jose, Santa Fe, Santa Rosa, Savannah, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, Superior, Syracuse, Toledo, Trenton, Washington, Wichita, Youngstown

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>)

*The USCCB Committee for *Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth* is grateful to Rev. Robert R. Cannon, MA, MEd, MTh, JCL of the Diocese of Venice, Florida, for preparing the *2009 Profile Report*.