

DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY
NATIONAL 2022 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 2023, 196 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. Sixty-four questionnaires, or 34%, completed the 2022 *Profile* survey.

Since the creation of the *Profile*, it has served several critical functions. The composite data has provided information on broad Natural Family Planning (NFP) programmatic trends, an annual glimpse of NFP efforts, which enabled the NFP Program staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) to develop appropriate strategies and supportive resources to support local diocesan NFP efforts. Because the *Profile* provides individual portraits of the diocesan NFP ministry, it has been a tool for diocesan staff to annually capture their information/statistics to compare with national trends.

Over four decades the *Profile* has captured strides in diocesan efforts to integrate NFP into all pastoral educational efforts treating human sexuality, marriage, and family life. At the same time, inconsistencies remain in NFP efforts across the country. Given the range of pastoral circumstances, NFP programs vary in availability and viability from diocese to diocese. The reasons for this inconsistency are complex. Frequently, as one diocese deepens its commitment to NFP educational efforts and financial support, another diocesan program is adversely impacted due to one or more challenging issues that could take in staff losses, budget cuts, changed episcopal support, and/or diocesan restructuring. It is worth noting that some smaller dioceses have more robust NFP programs than dioceses of much greater sizes. Again, this relates to multiple positive elements such as talent on the ground, diocesan funding, and the will of the local bishop.

Since the survey began (1990), respondents have repeatedly stated that NFP diocesan programs are able to flourish especially when a diocesan bishop gives visible support, regular encouragement, and ensures funding for the NFP ministry. In short, when a bishop acknowledges NFP as a vital element of marriage ministry, NFP efforts blossom.

Finally, when evaluating any diocesan NFP program, the most crucial ongoing pastoral leadership question can be summed up with a simple “Yes” or “No” to the question:

Can couples who wish to be faithful to Church teaching on conjugal love and responsible parenthood easily receive the NFP support they need?

The answer to the above question will determine how best to plan and support the local diocesan NFP ministry.

The results in this report reflect the responses of the 64 participating dioceses.

Our gratitude is extended to the NFP coordinators who completed the 2022 NFP survey on behalf of their dioceses. Gratitude is also extended to Ms. Nieves Estrugo who contacted many of the diocesan NFP coordinators to complete their surveys. The participating dioceses are listed below.

Altoona-Johnston, Amarillo, Arlington, Atlanta, Austin, Baltimore, Birmingham, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Burlington, Charleston, Charlotte, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Columbus, Denver, Erie, Fall River, Fresno, Grand Island, Green Bay, Indianapolis, Jackson, Joliet, Kansas City-St. Joseph, Lafayette, Lansing, Lincoln, Little Rock, La Crosse, Los Angeles, Louisville, Marquette, Metuchen, Milwaukee, New York, Newark, Norwich, Ogdensburg, Omaha, Orange, Owensboro, Palm Beach, Pensacola-Tallahassee, Phoenix, Providence, Raleigh, Reno, Rockford, Sacramento, San Francisco, Sioux City, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, Salina, Salt Lake City, Steubenville, Superior, Syracuse, Toledo, Washington, Winona, Worcester

SUMMARY

The following 2022 *Profile* summary of responses to crucial questions 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.

1. NFP education has moved from the periphery to a component of the diocesan marriage preparation ministry. Almost all dioceses have included some NFP education in their marriage preparation programs. Many dioceses have steadily increased the length of time and quality of resources offered to couples preparing for marriage. This is a positive trend.
2. Typically, NFP programs share funding, materials, and staff support of an umbrella department, e.g., the Marriage and Family Life Office. Thirty percent rely on part-time paid staff and volunteers. Only eleven percent have a full-time paid NFP coordinator.
3. Limited funding has been and continues to be a significant stumbling block. Nationally, diocesan NFP programs remain underfunded. Six to eight percent of dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs—76% of all NFP diocesan-funded programs operate on less than \$10,000.00 annually. A few diocesan budgets (14%) exceed \$30,000.00. Most Diocesan NFP programs rely on indirect funding from other sources (e.g., NFP materials, donations from parishes, grants from local Knights of Columbus Councils, a fee for course instruction, and follow-up fees).
4. Following an introduction to NFP class, most couples did not take a full course of NFP in their dioceses. The moral implication is troubling. The very nature of marriage and the two-fold meaning of the conjugal act—love and life, have been ruptured. A renewed national effort is needed to inspire couples to fully understand and embrace the Church's beautiful

teaching on human sexuality and the gift of life within marriage. More research must be done to understand this disparity and adjust NFP efforts to meet this cultural challenge.

5. Eleven responding dioceses have adjusted their marriage preparations to require couples to take an entire NFP course of instruction before marriage. Several years ago, only a few dioceses required an entire course of NFP instruction as part of marriage preparation beyond an introduction to NFP.
6. Most diocesan marriage preparation programs try to provide basic NFP information to various groups, with particular attention directed toward couples preparing for marriage (e.g., booklets, fact sheets, witness couple talks, NFP course instruction, etc.). The amount of time devoted to the discussions of NFP varies significantly from a few minutes to over two hours.
7. Partly due to the worldwide pandemic of COVID-19, 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.

I. PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

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

- 95% Part of the Office of Marriage and Family Life
- 2% A service of one of our Catholic hospital(s)
- 0% Part of Catholic Charities
- 3% Its own department

N=53

2) Who is responsible for coordinating the NFP Ministry for the Diocese?

- 56% Family Life Director
- 35% NFP Coordinator
- 2% Respect Life Director
- 7% No person designated

N=53

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

- 59% A part of full-time responsibilities
- 11% Full-time, paid
- 0% Full-time volunteer
- 28% Part-time, paid

- 2% Part-time volunteer N=61
- 4) Is the NFP coordinator trained in NFP methodology? (*Check one*)
- 77% Yes 23% No N=62
- 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*)
- 20 Teacher 42 User 30 Promoter N=53
- 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
17 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
19 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*TM
5 Family of the Americas Foundation
4 FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management)
9 Marquette University Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
8 Northwest Family Services (Sympto-Pro) N=45
- 7) Which statement best describes the NFP program policy regarding the remuneration of its teachers? (*Check one*)
- 56% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.
16% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.
7% We pay our NFP instructors (*part-time or full-time*).
21% The salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*) N=57
- 8) How many NFP teachers are part of the diocesan program? (*Count teaching couples as two*)
- Total number of teachers: 864
The average number of teachers: 15 N=59
- 9) Which organization trains the diocesan teachers? (*Check all that apply.*)
(*Frequency*)

- 30 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 41 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 44 Creighton Model *Fertility Care*TM
- 15 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 12 FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management)
- 26 Marquette University Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
- 14 Northwest Family Services (Sympto-Pro)

N=56

II. PROGRAM BUDGET

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

- 16% \$0
- 31% \$1–999
- 21% \$1,000–4,999
- 8% \$5,000–9,999
- 10% \$10,000–29,999
- 6% \$30,000–49,999
- 0% \$50,000–69,999
- 8% \$70,000+

N=62

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

71% Yes 29% No

N=58

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

- 9% \$0
- 7% \$1–25
- 7% \$26–45
- 14% \$46–65
- 2% \$66–85
- 9% \$86–100
- 52% \$101+

N=44

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*)

- 33 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)

| | | |
|----|--|------|
| 41 | Couple to Couple League (CCL) | |
| 44 | Creighton Model <i>Fertility Care</i> TM | |
| 15 | Family of the Americas Foundation | |
| 12 | FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management) | |
| 32 | Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Method) | |
| 0 | Standard Day Method (a calculation method) | |
| 18 | Northwest Family Services (Sympto-Pro) | |
| 0 | Two-Day Method (a cervical mucus-based method) | |
| 8 | Other | N=59 |

- 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 33,510 individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.
N=55

- 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 11,206 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP. N=55

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

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------|------|
| 5% | 0 minutes–15 minutes | |
| 15% | 16 minutes–30 minutes | |
| 23% | 31 minutes–45 minutes | |
| 26% | 46 minutes–1 hour | |
| 31% | 1 hour–2 hours+ | N=61 |

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

11 Yes 51 No N=62

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; 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.)

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