

Longitudinal data analysis identifies trends over time. Examining these trends can help refine future program execution, reveal opportunities to use resources more efficiently, and avoid overinterpreting results from a single year.

This analysis covers the years 2000–2025 and examines key questions from three sections of the *Profile*: program management, program budget, and program service, along with anecdotal comments and future NFP challenges.

Below is a summary of these findings from the NFP *Profile* from 2000 to 2025:

I. Program Management:

- Nearly every diocese designates one person as the NFP Coordinator (90%).
- In most dioceses, NFP ministry is part of Marriage and Family Life ministry (81%).
- The Family Life Director typically serves as the Diocesan NFP Coordinator, or the role is assigned to a full or part-time staff member. In most dioceses, the NFP Coordinator is a paid part-time position.

II. Program Budget:

- Overall, diocesan direct funding for NFP is inconsistent and modest.
- Funding remains a significant challenge: 63% of dioceses provide less than \$10,000 per year in direct support, excluding facility use, materials, and other in-kind assistance.
- Dedicated volunteer teachers and witness-couples sustain nearly all NFP programs, viewing their instruction as a ministry.

III. Program Service:

- About 90% of dioceses include NFP in marriage preparation in some form, and more than a dozen require couples to complete a full NFP course.
- NFP instruction time varies widely and is usually under one hour.

IV. Future NFP Challenges—A Look Over the Horizon:

- There is a need for national review of new NFP educational providers.

In the 1980s, only five¹ national Catholic providers promoted NFP methods and offered both client and teacher education. Today, a growing number of organizations and individuals offer NFP instruction. It is critical that diocesan marriage ministry staff can identify which experts provide authentic NFP education in accordance with Church teaching. The USCCB NFP Program

1. The five NFP national providers are: Billings Ovulation Method Association—USA, The Couple to Couple League International, Family of the Americas, Northwest Family Services, and the Pope Paul VI Institute for the Study of Human Reproduction (Creighton Model).

staff can help to evaluate new NFP experts.

- The trend of online NFP education will continue to evolve and expand.

Since the world-wide COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, online NFP instruction has grown significantly, enabling providers to serve couples beyond their dioceses. Rather than attending classes in person, couples in many places can now satisfy Pre-Cana requirements online. In the 2025 *Profile*, 83% of responding dioceses reported accepting online instruction for this purpose.

Diocesan staff will need a process for evaluating which NFP online providers complement their marriage ministry programs. The USCCB's NFP Program can assist with such evaluations.

- Inconsistent funding for diocesan NFP educational efforts suggests a lack of perceived value about the role of NFP education in married life.

NFP has matured in its theological foundation rooted in Christian anthropology.² In addition, developments in scientific research on human fertility, sexual behavior, and NFP studies showing the benefits of NFP use in marriage³ reveal that the modern natural methods are key to supporting conjugal life.

- In marriage preparation programs, a significant gap exists between couples who receive an introduction to NFP (many) and those who later complete a full course of education in an NFP method (significantly less).

More targeted research is needed to understand why this gap persists between Church teaching and marital practice. The findings could help identify creative ways to address this concern and improve pastoral NFP programs.

- Remote preparation for the Sacrament of Marriage must include Church teaching on the meaning of human sexuality, fertility, the virtue of chastity, and married love and the gift of life.

As presented in the *Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life*⁴, the Church must strengthen catechetical efforts at appropriate age levels by presenting the wonder of human sexuality in all its fullness, the nature of marriage, and the responsible stewardship of fertility within marriage and adult life. The virtue of chastity is an essential subject that must be addressed in programming for all ages of children, youth, and young adults. NFP and fertility literacy has an important role to play in this pastoral educational process.

2. *Familiaris consortio*, n. 32.

3. See for example, Michael D. Manhart and Richard J. Fehring, "The State of the Science of Natural Family Planning: A Report from NFP Scientists. Meeting September 4, 2024," *The Linacre Quarterly*, 0(0) 2025:1–14. This is an excellent example of ongoing research demonstrating the benefits of NFP in marriage.

4. See Dicastery of Laity, Family and Life. *Catechumenal Pathways for Married Life*, 2022. The document gives a vision and includes the outlines for the Phases and Stages of catechetical preparation for marriage from childhood through adulthood. See https://www.laityfamilylife.va/content/dam/laityfamilylife/amoris-laetitia/OrientamentiCatecumenatomatrimoniale/Catechumenal%20Pathways_ENG.pdf.