

**DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY**  
**NATIONAL 2015 PROFILE REPORT**

**NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING PROGRAM**  
**Secretariat of Laity, Marriage, Family Life and Youth**  
**United States Conference of Catholic Bishops**  
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**DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY  
NATIONAL  
2015 PROFILE REPORT**

**OVERVIEW**

Between January and May 2016, 197 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. One hundred and three questionnaires were returned for this year's *Profile*.

The *Profile* serves several important functions. The composite data provides information on broad Natural Family Planning (NFP) programmatic trends which enables the NFP Program staff of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops to develop strategies and supportive 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.

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 unevenness 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 this unevenness are complex. They take in a variety of issues such as: NFP staff retiring or moving out of the diocese; chancery restructuring; teacher loss; budget cuts, and so forth. In many cases, as one diocese improves its NFP program, another diocesan program is impacted by these adverse changes. It is notable that some smaller dioceses have much larger programs with more limited resources than dioceses of much greater size and resources. Regardless of these circumstances, bishops need to ensure that the diocesan NFP staff have a mature understanding of Church teaching on human sexuality, marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood and the science and methods of NFP. This knowledge is critical to program development. That said, the most dramatic improvements and sustained growth in individual NFP diocesan programs however, occurs when the diocesan bishop gives visible public support and regular encouragement to NFP efforts. When the bishop sees the necessity of NFP as a vital element of marriage ministry, growth will occur.

New to this year's NFP Profile report is an Addendum with a summary of a survey regarding diocesan NFP services and health insurance reimbursements. The report is shared with you courtesy of the American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals. Becky Knapp (Diocese of Wichita) is the author.

The following 2015 *Profile* summary of responses to key questions describes the current state of diocesan NFP ministry throughout the United States.

## **SUMMARY**

1. Since the Profile began in 1990, almost all diocesan programs have included some level of NFP education in their marriage ministries. More and more dioceses have increased the length of time and quality of materials offered to couples preparing for marriage.
2. Limited funding in most cases remains a stumbling block to successful diocesan NFP programs. Nationally, diocesan NFP programs remain largely underfunded. Fifty-five percent of dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs. Fifty-eight percent of all NFP diocesan funded programs operate on less than \$10,000 per year. A handful of diocesan budgets (18%) exceed \$30,000. Only a modest amount of funds was collected from other sources, e.g., NFP materials, course instruction, and follow-up fees.
3. In most dioceses, NFP programs are invisible in annual diocesan budgets. Just over a third (34%) 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.
4. In most dioceses, NFP programs share funding, materials, and staff support of an umbrella department, e.g., Marriage and Family Life Office. Most dioceses (28%) rely on part time paid staff. Eleven dioceses have a full-time paid NFP coordinator. The majority of diocesan NFP programs depend on volunteer NFP teachers to sustain their programs (52%). Of these dioceses, only a quarter (24%) give a modest stipend to teachers to cover personal costs, e.g., transportation, babysitters, materials, etc.
5. The majority of dioceses include NFP in their marriage preparation guidelines (91%). 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 (151,364<sup>1</sup>) are compared with the number of individuals (19,891<sup>2</sup>) that took a full course in NFP in 2015. In a culture wherein 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 within marriage.
6. Twelve of the responding 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 of the responding dioceses are exploring requiring NFP as part of marriage preparation.<sup>3</sup> It is still too early to tell if this is a national trend. Anecdotal

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<sup>1</sup> *The Official Catholic Directory 2015.*

<sup>2</sup> *See, 2015 Profile Report, Q.22.*

<sup>3</sup> *See, Profile Report, Q.30 and Requiring a Full Course of NFP Instruction in Marriage Preparation—a Report* (September 2008) available at: [www.usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/nfp-topics-and-resources.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/nfp-topics-and-resources.cfm).

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.

7. 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.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since 1990, this *Diocesan NFP Profile Report* has identified some 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 of catechesis a more sophisticated understanding of human sexuality and the nature of marriage, conjugal love and responsible parenthood among the faithful. This will enable men and women, when they marry, to more readily embrace God’s plan for their marriages. In this context, the methods of Natural Family Planning will then be understood as the ethical skillset that can help husband and wife live God’s vision of married love.

Currently, the majority of couples preparing for marriage, and married couples themselves, do not grasp the Church’s beautiful teachings on human sexuality and marriage (recall that most often the time spent in proximate marriage preparation is too late; remote education and formation is essential). In general, men and women do not understand why contraception is morally wrong or harmful to the marital union. They consequently do not see how the modern methods of NFP are different from contraception. This is a deep problem that begs for a solution. Although not represented in the following results, USCCB NFP staff have information on those dioceses that have addressed this difficulty by developing robust catechesis. The catechesis focuses on the human person as made in God’s image, the nature of human sexuality (especially using the Theology of the Body), and the nature of marriage, conjugal love, responsible parenthood, and the value of children. In such diocesan NFP programs, with the starting point as God’s plan for marriage, NFP education is then introduced as a support. When this approach is implemented, diocesan NFP staff find that more couples not only take NFP classes, but embrace Church teaching.

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*)

- 91% Part of the office of Marriage and Family Life
- 2% A service of one of our Catholic hospital(s)
- 5% Part of Catholic Charities
- 2% Its own department

N=90

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

- 41% Diocesan NFP Coordinator
- 50% Family Life Director
- 2% Respect Life Director
- 7% No person designated

N=88

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 8 years with a combined total of 741 years of experience.

N=94

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

- 50% Part of full-time responsibilities
- 11% Full-time, paid
- 0% Full-time, volunteer
- 28% Part-time, paid
- 11% Part-time, volunteer

N=97

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

81% Yes      19% No

N=98

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*)

49 Teacher      71 User      51 Promoter

N=83

If a teacher, how long has the person been teaching?

The average teaching experience is 16.5 years. N=50

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

*(Frequency)*

23 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)  
29 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*<sup>TM</sup> Center  
12 Family of the Americas Foundation  
29 Couple to Couple League (CCL)  
9 Northwest Family Services  
4 Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)  
16 Other

N=77

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

Total number of teachers: 1,611 N=94

The average number of teachers: 17

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

52% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.  
24% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We give them a stipend to cover expenses.  
8% We pay our NFP instructors *(part and/or full time)*.  
16% Salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources *(e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.)*.

N=95

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

*(Frequency)*

51 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)  
74 Couple to Couple League (CCL)  
68 Creighton Model *Fertility Care*<sup>TM</sup> Center  
15 Northwest Family Services  
22 Family of the Americas Foundation

15 Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)  
 14 Diocesan program N=94

10) Does the diocese have an NFP Advisory Committee?  
 24% Yes      76% No N=99

11) Do you prepare an annual diocesan report on NFP ministry?  
 34% Yes      66% No N=99

## II. PROGRAM BUDGET

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

(Frequency)

10	\$0	
22	\$1 - 999	
13	\$1,000 - 4,999	
12	\$5,000 - 9,999	
18	\$10,000 - 29,999	
11	\$30,000 - 49,999	
6	\$50,000 - 69,999	
5	\$70,000+	N=97

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

15%	\$0	
24%	\$1 - 999	
16%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
8%	\$5 - 9,999	
19%	\$10 - 29,999	
12%	\$30 - 49,999	
3%	\$50 - 69,999	
3%	\$70+	N=91

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

46%	\$0	
21%	\$1- 999	
16%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
6%	\$5,000 - 9,999	
11%	\$10,000>	N=96

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

34% Yes	66% No	N=91
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Comment: The average fee for an introductory session is less than \$40.00. 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).

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

90% Yes	10% No	N=98
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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	
62%	Individual NFP provider determines fees	
21%	Combination of diocesan staff and individual NFP provider determine fees	

N=85

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

7%	\$0	
2%	\$1 - 25	
6%	\$26 - 45	
11%	\$46 - 65	
6%	\$66 - 85	
13%	\$86 - 99	
55%	\$100>	N=87

Comment: Most fees vary from \$46 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*)



40% Yes      60% No      N=87

Comment: The average charge for a follow-up session was less than \$65  
N=35

### III. PROGRAM SERVICE

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

(*Frequency*)

82	Cervical Mucus Method	
74	Sympto-Thermal	
21	Sympto-Hormonal Method	
3	Other	N=93

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 76,523 individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.

N=93

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

More than 19,891 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP.      N=79

23) Does the diocese have guidelines for marriage preparation?

96% Yes      4% No      N=101

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

91% Yes      9% No      N=99

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  
 28% 31 minutes - 45 minutes  
 14% 46 minutes - 1 hour  
 34% 1 hour - 2 hours+ N=100

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

43% Yes      62% No

N=102

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

14% 30 minutes  
 35% 45 minutes  
 51% 1 hour - 2 hours

N=43

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

(*Frequency*)

64 The appropriate Church teachings  
 43 Reproductive anatomy & physiology  
 54 Basic NFP science (e.g., *all the signs of fertility discussed*)  
 51 Basic NFP methodology (e.g., an overview of all the specific NFP systems offered in your diocese)  
 67 Benefits of NFP  
 50 Contraindications of various contraceptives  
 51 NFP witness talk N=69

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

12 Yes      88 No

N=102

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

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**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses  
for participating in the 2015 Profile Report**

Albany, Alexandria, Allentown, Altoona-Johnston, Anchorage, Atlanta, Arlington, Baltimore, Birmingham, Bismarck, Boston, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Camden, Charleston, Charlotte, Cheyenne, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Colorado Springs, Columbus, Corpus Christi, Covington, Denver, Detroit, Dodge City, Duluth, Eparchy of Saint Maron of Brooklyn, Erie, Evansville, Fall River, Fargo, Ft. Wayne-South Bend, Ft. Worth, Galveston-Houston, Gary, Grand Island, Grand Rapids, Greensburg, Honolulu, Houma-Thibodaux, Indianapolis, Joliet, Kalamazoo, Kansas City, Knoxville, La Crosse, Lafayette (LA), Lake Charles, Lansing, Las Cruces, Las Vegas, Lincoln, Little Rock, Los Angeles, Louisville, Madison, Memphis, Miami, Milwaukee, New York, Newark, Norwich, Oakland, Ogdensburg, Oklahoma City, Omaha, Orange, Palm Beach, Paterson, Peoria, Philadelphia, Phoenix, Portland (ME), Portland (OR), Providence, Raleigh, Reno, Richmond, Rochester, Rockford, Rockville Centre, Sacramento, Salina, San Diego, San Francisco, Santa Fe, Savannah, Sioux Falls, Spokane, Springfield (IL), Springfield-Cape Girardeau, St. Augustine, St. Cloud, St. Louis, St. Paul and Minneapolis, Steubenville, Toledo, Trenton, Wichita, Winona, and Worcester.

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**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 [www.usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/upload/Diocesan-Plan.pdf](http://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: [www.usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/standards.cfm](http://www.usccb.org/nfp/diocesan-ministry/standards.cfm).)

\*The USCCB Committee on 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 *2015 Profile Report*.

## Addendum

### Report on 2016 Update on Insurance Coverage of NFP in the Dioceses of the USA

American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals

#### Summary

Whether diocesan, hospital or independently based, methods of Natural Family Planning (NFP) face the challenge of funding programs for sustainability. One possible resource is through insurance reimbursement.

In 2007 the Ad Hoc Committee for Third Party Reimbursement of the American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals (AAFCP), with the cooperation of the USCCB's NFP Program, mailed a letter from the then Pro-Life Committee Chairman, Cardinal Justin Rigali, to the bishops of the United States asking them to consider covering NFP services for diocesan employees through the insurance plan offered in their dioceses.

As a follow up to the recent update to the ICD-10-CM coding system, the American Academy of FertilityCare™ Professionals, through the Ad Hoc Committee for Third Party Reimbursement, conducted a survey to assess the provision of insurance coverage for NFP services by Catholic dioceses of the United States for diocesan employees. The survey was sent to all NFP Coordinators (197+) through the USCCB group email list (YourMembership) and to members of the AAFCP. Of the 115 respondents, less than 18% provide insurance coverage for NFP Services for diocesan employees. This reflects the need for more work to change diocesan insurance plans to support NFP services.

#### *Survey and Results*

When asking the question as to insurance coverage for NFP services for diocesan employees, the following contributing factors must be considered: some dioceses are self-insured; and some are insured through an outside agency. With regard to the NFP insurance coverage itself, there are two separate parts to consider: 1. whether NFP education is a recognized service under the particular insurance plan; and 2. whether the service provider (e.g., the NFP teacher, such as a FertilityCare™ Practitioner) is recognized by the insurance company.

The goal of the AAFCP Ad Hoc Committee for Third Party Reimbursement is to encourage all dioceses to provide coverage of NFP services through the insurance coverage provided to diocesan employees. This is a large task. In addition, it would mean that the next step would be to develop a strategy to expand and encourage NFP insurance coverage for all employees of Catholic institutions throughout the nation.

The AAFCP Ad Hoc Committee for Third Party Reimbursement once more is taking steps to ask dioceses to consider NFP coverage if they do not already have it. In an effort to continue to inform and encourage insurance coverage of NFP services, the AAFCP will send a letter to all bishops explaining the benefits of NFP coverage.

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*Submitted by Becky Knapp, Diocese of Wichita.*