

**DIOCESAN NATURAL FAMILY PLANNING MINISTRY**  
**NATIONAL 2021 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  
2021 PROFILE REPORT**

**OVERVIEW**

In January 2022, 196 dioceses were invited to participate in the annual *Diocesan Natural Family Planning Ministry National Profile (Profile)* survey. Twenty-two questionnaires, or 11 percent, were returned for the 2021 *Profile* survey.

Due to the continued disruptive effects of COVID-19, many dioceses were unable to report their 2021 NFP program numbers. Yet, a benefit has resulted from the pandemic's disruption. As with other pastoral programs, innovative internet NFP resources for instruction, education, consultation, and the charting of fertility have been developed and provide a bright future for couples to live out the Church's teaching on human sexuality and married love.

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, 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 three decades the *Profile* has identified great strides in diocesan efforts to integrate NFP into all pastoral educational efforts treating human sexuality, marriage, and family life. At the same time, unevenness remains in NFP efforts across the country. Given the range of pastoral circumstances, NFP programs continue to vary in availability and viability from diocese to diocese. The underlying reasons for this variety are complex. Frequently as one diocese deepens its commitment to NFP educational efforts and financial support, another diocesan program is impacted adversely due to teacher loss, budget cuts, modest public ecclesial support, and diocesan restructuring efforts to name a few changes. It is worth noting, some smaller dioceses have more robust NFP programs with fewer resources than dioceses of much greater size.

Since the survey began (1990), respondents have stated repeatedly that NFP diocesan programs strengthen appreciably when a diocesan bishop gives visible support, regular encouragement, and funding to NFP efforts. 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 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 the local diocesan NFP ministry.

## **SUMMARY**

The following 2021 *Profile* summary of responses to crucial questions gives a broad view of the diocesan NFP ministry throughout the United States.

1. Since the Profile began in 1990, almost all dioceses have included at least some NFP education in their marriage preparation programs. The majority of dioceses have increased steadily the length of time and quality of materials offered to couples preparing for marriage. This is a positive trend.
2. In most responding dioceses, NFP programs share funding, materials, and staff support of an umbrella department, e.g., Marriage and Family Life Office. Thirty-six percent rely on part-time paid staff and volunteers to support NFP efforts. Only nine percent have a full-time paid NFP coordinator.
3. Limited funding has and continues to be a major stumbling block. Nationally, diocesan NFP programs remain underfunded. Fifty percent of dioceses surveyed budgeted less than \$5,000 for NFP programs. Sixty-five percent of all NFP diocesan-funded programs operated on less than \$10,000 per year. A few diocesan budgets (25%) exceeded \$30,000. Many programs relied on indirect funding collected 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, most couples did not take a full course of NFP. The moral implication is clear. 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 and the gift of life within marriage.
5. Four of the responding dioceses require couples to take a full NFP course of instruction before marriage. Several years ago, only a few dioceses required a full course of NFP instruction as part of marriage preparation. This number has increased in the last decade to twelve.
6. The majority of diocesan marriage preparation programs make an effort 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, and NFP course instruction). The amount of time devoted to the discussions of NFP varies significantly from a few minutes to over two hours.
7. Although anecdotal, there is evidence that the world-wide pandemic of Covid-19 has prompted major NFP providers and diocesan programs to adopt online formats to deliver NFP instruction and associated resources.



*(Frequency)*

- 6 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 0 Boston Cross Check
- 5 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 9 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*<sup>TM</sup>
- 1 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 0 FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management)
- 2 Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
- 2 Northwest Family Services (Sympto-Pro)

N=18

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

- 40% Most of our NFP instructors are volunteers. We do not give them a stipend.
- 20% 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*).
- 35% The salaries/stipends for instructors are provided by other sources (*e.g., Catholic Hospital, Knights of Columbus, etc.*)

N=20

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

Total number of teachers: 279  
The average number of teachers: 13

N=22

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

*(Frequency)*

- 10 Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)
- 9 Couple to Couple League (CCL)
- 16 Creighton Model *FertilityCare*<sup>TM</sup>
- 4 Family of the Americas Foundation
- 4 FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management)
- 12 Marquette University's Institute of NFP (Marquette Model)
- 8 Northwest Family Services (Sympto-Pro)

## II. PROGRAM BUDGET

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

5%	\$0	
35%	\$1 - 999	
10%	\$1,000 - 4,999	
15%	\$5,000 - 9,999	
10%	\$10,000 - 29,999	
10%	\$30,000 - 49,999	
0%	\$50,000 - 69,999	
15%	\$70,000+	N=20

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

62% Yes      38% No      N=21

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

8%	\$0	
0%	\$1 - 25	
8%	\$26 - 45	
17%	\$46 - 65	
0%	\$66 - 85	
8%	\$86 - 100	
58%	\$101+	N=12

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*)

13	Billings Ovulation Method Association (BOMA)	
10	Couple to Couple League (CCL)	
3	Creighton Model FertilityCare™	
5	Family of the Americas Foundation	
3	FEMM (Fertility Education Medical Management)	
12	Marquette Method	
1	Standard Day Method (a calculation method)	
8	Sympto-Pro (provided by Northwest Family Services)	
1	Two-Day Method (a cervical mucus-based method)	
9	Other	N=20

- 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 8,287 individuals received some information/instruction on NFP.

N=19

- 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 3,010 individuals attended a class/instruction on NFP.

N=18

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

5% 0 minutes - 15 minutes  
14% 16 minutes - 30 minutes  
34% 31 minutes - 45 minutes  
14% 46 minutes - 1 hour  
33% 1 hour - 2 hours+

N=21

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

4 Yes            18 No

N=22

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**Gratitude is extended to the following dioceses  
for participating in the 2021 Profile Report**

**Allentown, Amarillo, Austin, Brownsville, Burlington, Charleston, Cheyenne, Columbus, Detroit, Dubuque, Grand Rapids, Joliet, La Crosse, Newark, Rockford, Sacramento, St. Cloud, St. Louis, Salina, Salt Lake City, Tulsa, Winona**

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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).)

*Standards for Diocesan NFP Ministry.* Washington, DC: United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Office of Publishing and Promotion Services, 2000. (Available at [usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning/standards-diocesan-nfp-ministry](http://usccb.org/topics/natural-family-planning/standards-diocesan-nfp-ministry).)

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