

Faithful Families Thriving Communities

2023 Annual Report

What is Faithful Families?

Faithful Families Thriving Communities (Faithful Families) is used in communities of faith across the country to promote health for individuals, families, and communities. Faithful Families is open to all religious traditions and engages religious communities across the socio-ecological model, through direct education, environmental supports, and community-wide efforts aimed at chronic disease prevention.

OUR VISION

Faithful Families believes that communities of faith are important health advocates, particularly in communities affected by health disparities or lacking access to crucial resources. We empower faith communities to become changemakers to help their communities thrive – physically, mentally, and spiritually.

Improving Health

Faithful Families recognizes that faith communities play a special role as they support their community's health and work to decrease health disparities. They offer unique resources and perspectives to connect a community's faith or religious traditions with messages and changes to support long-term health and chronic disease prevention. These changes can have long term impacts on families and communities and decrease the risk for developing chronic diseases including heart disease, diabetes, and cancer.

North Carolina Flagship Program

Faithful Families was developed and first implemented in North Carolina, where it continues to build statewide capacity through a strengthened partnership with Steps to Health, NC State University's SNAP-Ed program. Through this partnership, Faithful Families prioritizes work with NC communities that lack access to resources to support health.

In North Carolina (NC), Faithful Families is being implemented by Family and Consumer Science (FCS) Agents, EFNEP educators, Steps to Health nutrition educators, and health department staff. In 2023, our team worked to create a new model for program delivery, which includes an option for facilitators to mix-and-match lessons based on participants' interests and faith community needs, and we developed a new discussion-based version of the nine lesson curriculum that we are currently pilot testing in 2024. As part of this, we created a series of 18 videos (9 lessons in English, 9 lessons in Spanish) that accompany each of the lessons. They are available for participants at this [website](#). We saw a large upswing in the number of local educators interested in delivering Faithful Families in 2023. We held a kick-off meeting for the program on October 19th, 2023, which was attended by 19 facilitators. We held two virtual trainings for the new curriculum options, in November, 2023. 89 facilitators from extension and health departments across almost all counties in NC have been trained for program implementation in 2024.

As faith communities continue to recover from the impacts of the COVID pandemic, programming grew slowly back in 2023. Seven facilitators across the U.S. delivered Faithful Families in 12 faith communities in 2023, reaching 343 people with the nine-lesson curriculum and impacting 1355 people in those congregations through changes to policies and the environment like creating physical activity spaces in churches and bringing

local produce to faith community settings. In North Carolina, one facilitator implemented the program in 2023, in 2 faith communities in 2023, reaching 50 people with the nine-lesson curriculum and impacting 300 people in those congregations through connections with clinical partners. Given the large number of facilitators we trained this year, and the excitement about new program materials and tools, we anticipate a significant growth in impact numbers next program year.

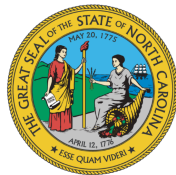
Partnership and Training

In 2021, Faithful Families scaled back our National Partnership model, making it easier for organizations outside North Carolina to access both training and curriculum materials. Online training continues to be available to organizations outside NC through the NC State Reporter system and Moodle and digital copies of curriculum materials are available for purchase online through an eCommerce platform facilitated through NC State Office of Information Technology. While the formal partnership model has been discontinued, we continue to support facilitators and organizations outside NC with ongoing technical assistance and support through webinars and newsletters and connection to resources that can supplement programming. 3 new facilitators from two states completed the online training in 2023.

The Faithful Families team will continue to enhance virtual and hybrid program guidance and resources (including focus on enhancing the discussion-based curriculum guidance and incorporating mental health concepts and resources) to support faith communities across the U.S., as we work to meet community needs as we begin to address the long-term impacts of COVID.

Learn More

For more information visit FaithfulFamilies.com



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