

GROWING OUR OWN: DISTANCE BSW EDUCATION IN ALASKA

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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

- Land, Sea, Space Grant University
- BASW Program
- CSWE accredited since 1984
- Distance program started in 1991
- Commitment to rural and remote Alaska, and Indigenous populations





UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS SOCIAL WORK

ROOTED IN CORE SOCIAL WORK VALUES, WE EDUCATE GENERALIST SOCIAL WORK PRACTITIONERS TO PROMOTE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES, EMPHASIZING THE DIVERSITY AND UNIQUENESS OF RURAL ALASKA, IT INTERCONNECTS WITH OUR GLOBAL SOCIETY. WE ARE COMMITTED TO CREATING A COMMUNITY OF CRITICAL THINKERS DEDICATED TO BECOMING COMPETENT, CULTURALLY GROUNDED, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS PROFESSIONALS ENGAGED IN LIFELONG LEARNING AND RESEARCH THAT HONORS DIVERSE WAYS OF KNOWING



The Alaskan Environment

- Limited road system
- 6 distinct regions
- Community populations 50 - 300k
- Almost all travel by small aircraft
- 229 federal recognized tribes



Our need for a “grow your own” model

- High and fast turnover in small communities and the impact this has on community/social worker relationships
- The need for cultural competence and community knowledge to be an effective practitioner
- Underserved communities with few to no helping professionals, or only itinerant professionals

UAF SOCIAL WORK DISTANCE MODALITIES

Distance

- Online Asynchronous
- Zoom distance with technology enhanced classrooms

Rural Cohort

- Blended delivery
- Face-to-face intensive class times in Fairbanks (1 week + 3 days)
- Zoom distance weekly between intensives.

The University of Alaska's Behavioral Health Pipeline

RHS Certificate

- 34 college credits
- 100 practicum hours
- 1 week intensives /month
- Elders as co-teachers



HUMS AAS

- 27 of the 34 RHS credits count towards the HUMS AAS degree
- Blended delivery
- Intensive + Audios
- Elders participate



BSW Degree

- 36 credits of the HUMS AAS count towards BSW degree
- Blended delivery
- Intensives + Audios
- Elders participate



Online MSW



UAA MSW



Masters in Rural Development



Master in Counseling

RURAL COHORT MODEL

- Elders in every in-person intensive course
- Holistic, culturally grounded
- Education toward social change/justice
- Connecting learning to self, family, and community
- Safe, comfort, and trust
- Intensive supportive academic advising

ELDERS HOLD CLASSES TOGETHER

- Elders are the living embodiment of historical and generational healing
- Role models of resilience and lifelong learning
 - Elders provide cultural grounding, safety, and wisdom



BSW PROGRAM OUTCOMES

Rural Cohort

- 78% of 56 graduates since 2004 are Indigenous Alaskans
- 9 or 16% MSW graduates or current
- 1 LCSW

Alumni Survey 2023

- 53% MSW ^(N=175) graduates or current
- 18% graduates licensed at the LBSW, LMSW, or LCSW level
- 65% currently working in the social work field



THANK YOU!

University of Alaska Fairbanks

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