# OWING OUR OWN: DISTANCE BSW EDUCATION IN ALASKA

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UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS

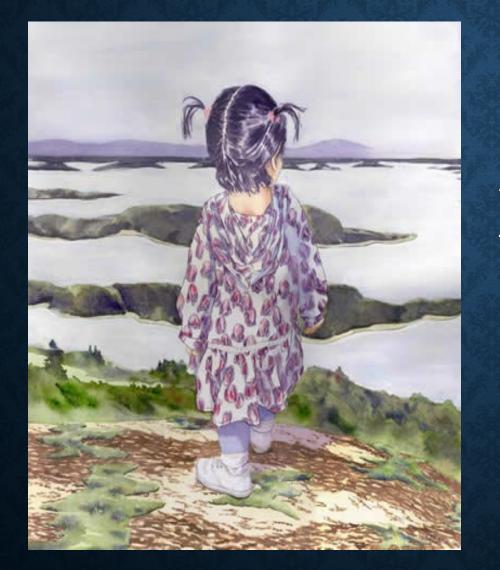
#### **UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS**

#### •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

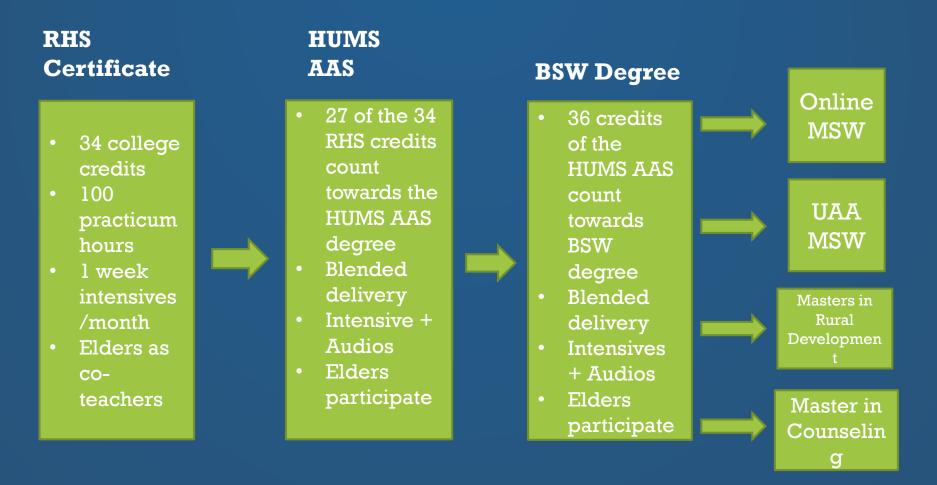
#### Online Asynchronous

#### **Rural Cohort**

• Blended delivery

- Zoom distance with technology enhanced classrooms
- 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



## **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 (N=175) • 53% MSW graduates or current

- 18% graduates licensed at the LBSW, LMSW, or LCSW level
- 65% currently working in the social work field









## **THANK YOU!**

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