

Project BLENDS FAQs for MSW Students



School of Social Work
UNIVERSITY of ALASKA ANCHORAGE

What is Project BLENDS?

Project BLENDS: *Building Capacity for Interdisciplinary Collaboration among Alaska-based Related Service Providers* is an interdisciplinary, advanced training program designed to prepare graduates in four related service disciplines to work collaboratively to support infants, toddlers, and preschool-age children with disabilities and their families.

When do I apply to Project BLENDS?

You apply for Project BLENDS in the fall of your first year of the full-time program or third year of the part-time program. Advanced standing students who are full-time apply to Project BLENDS when they are applying to the MSW program. Advanced standing part-time students apply in the fall of their first year in the MSW program.

When do I participate in Project BLENDS?

- Full-time MSW students complete Project Blends in the summer, fall, and spring semesters of their second year of the MSW program.
- Full-time advanced standing MSW students complete Project BLENDS in the summer, fall, and spring semesters of their one year of the MSW program.
- Part-time MSW students complete Project Blends in the summer, fall, and spring semesters of their fourth year of the MSW program.
- Part-time advanced standing MSW students complete Project BLENDS in the summer, fall, and spring semesters of their second year in the MSW program.

What is the time commitment for Project BLENDS?

In May you will attend a full day orientation meeting. In the summer semester, you complete 15 hours of field-based observation with two supervision meetings, and a 3-credit course (PSY/SWK 620: Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health). In the fall and spring semesters, you complete a 1-credit seminar. The seminar is coordinated so that it does not interfere with your required MSW courses.

What are the conference requirements and how are they paid for?

As part of Project BLENDS, you are required to attend the Division for Early Childhood Conference which occurs in September or November of each year, and one day of the Alaska Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health Institute which occurs in the spring of each year. The grant covers 100% of costs associated with travel and registration for both conferences.

How and when are the financial supports disbursed?

You will receive a total of \$18,750.00 that is dispersed through both the Office of Financial Aid and the Business Office. Funding to cover the required 5-credits of BLENDS coursework is dispersed through the Office of Financial Aid. The remaining amount is dispersed between August, December, and May through the Business Office which is deposited directly into your linked bank account.

How does my MSW practicum align with Project BLENDS?

MSW students participate in Project BLENDS while they are completing their advanced generalist field practicum. As part of Project BLENDS, Project BLENDS scholars work with the MSW Practicum Coordinator and the Project BLENDS Director to identify an MSW practicum placement that provides services to infants, toddlers, or preschoolers with disabilities or who are at-risk for disabilities. Project BLENDS does not require additional practicum hours beyond the hours required for the MSW practicum.

What are examples of clinical placements for MSW students in Project BLENDS?

Programs for Infants and Children (PIC)
School District Preschool Programs
Anchorage Center for Pediatrics
Alaska Behavioral Health
Southcentral Foundation
Providence Nurse Family Partnership
Head Start Mental Health Consultation Programs

Can I participate in Project BLENDS and other student opportunities?

MSW Project BLENDS scholars may simultaneously complete the School Social Work Specialization and the Graduate Certificate in Children's Mental Health. MSW Project BLENDS scholars may also participate in AHEC and LEND, but not during the same year. Please discuss these other advanced training opportunities with your MSW advisor and Project BLENDS faculty mentor.

What is my commitment after I graduate?

To enroll in Project BLENDS you are required to sign a Service Agreement, as stipulated by the U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education (OSEP), that indicates you agree to work for an equivalent of 2-years (can include ½ time employment) in a position which services infants, toddlers, or children (birth through age 8) with disabilities for at least 51% of the time or 51% of your caseload. This can also include indirect services (program development, administration, technical assistance, research, policy) in which at least 51% of your time is work related to the training.

For more information, contact the Project Director, Dr. Hattie Harvey – haharvey@alaska.edu or visit the project website, www.uaa.alaska.edu/project-blends

