

## Barriers to Innovation & Redesign

*Local government leaders noted a multitude of barriers to implementing local redesign over the course of the six meetings, though the exact statutory barriers varied by issue and jurisdiction. Ultimately, local leaders consistently voiced five key barriers that impede their ability to work together on redesign activities:*

- **Process, Not Outcomes, Drives Services.** Local government leaders feel that many state regulations require extensive, overlapping and sometimes conflicting requirements of them, making it difficult to focus the attention needed on the outcomes expected of Minnesota's public services. For these leaders, the process-focused nature of Minnesota's funding streams, regulations and bureaucratic culture can be a significant barrier to advancing redesign ideas.
- **Limiting Beliefs.** Several local leaders pointed to turf battles and protectionist attitudes — among both fellow elected officials and government employees — as another key barrier to redesign. These attitudes, often rooted in town rivalries, community identities or elected and staff leaders' fear of change, can seed reluctance towards collaboration among local governments across the state.
- **Eroding State-Local Relationships.** Local government leaders who attended the Forums often noted feeling that the state-local government relationship has eroded over recent years. Trust is low and blame is high. Unfortunately, these attitudes are seen as arresting communication and collaboration among state and local government leaders, according to Forum attendees.
- **Focus on Preventing Liability.** Forum attendees consistently noted the deep-seeded fear of publicly making mistakes and being held libel — either literally or politically — among local government elected officials and staff. From exposé media stories to constituent anger, these leaders believe the environment surrounding local governments offers too many incentives to avoid any risk-taking or innovation. Attendees believe that, as a result, local governments struggle to pursue the comprehensive redesign ideas they believe could transform a service delivery.
- **Lack of a Statewide Plan.** Finally, local government leaders noted a need for clear and consistent direction from the state in the form of a strategic plan or other goal-setting mechanism. According to these leaders, the state's priorities have changed as often as the people in office have changed, and state funding strategies oscillate as a result. These leaders believe that having a consistent, long-range and nonpartisan articulation of the state's goals and objectives could equip local leaders to make the long-term plans and investments needed to pursue transformative redesign. Without this plan, local government leaders report feeling reluctant to take the risks and make the investments needed to create change.