



MINNESOTA **REDESIGN** PROJECT  
GOVERNANCE      TRANSPARENCY  
FLEXIBILITY

**HUMAN SERVICES SYSTEM REDESIGN:  
THE STATE-COUNTY RESULTS ACCOUNTABILITY INITIATIVE**

**BACKGROUND**

The AMC Redesign Project, aimed at creating greater transparency, flexibility and innovation across state and county government, has stimulated much discussion and a “can do” approach to redesigning the way we do business. Through the AMC Redesign Project, counties have begun to explore how to redesign the structural relationship between the state and counties to promote greater accountability, productivity, consistency and results in Minnesota’s human services system. Such redesign is necessary as the complexity of Minnesota’s publicly-funded human services system has rendered the structural relationship between the state and counties inadequate for assuring that:

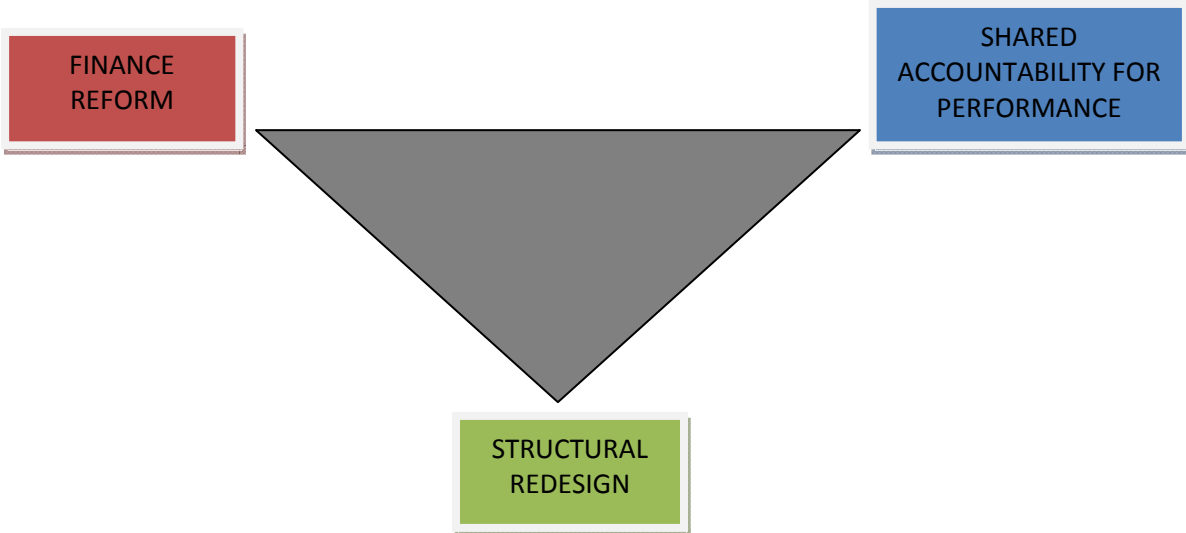
- ✓ Tax dollars are used efficiently to produce desired results
- ✓ Clients consistently have access to high quality services that effectively meet their needs
- ✓ The state and counties have the tools necessary to produce intended outcomes

Redesign of the human services system should proceed only according to the following principles:

1. **Client-Focused:** Clients’ safety and well-being must be at the center of any human services system redesign.
2. **Outcomes-Based:** Effective human service delivery systems are those that are strategically designed to enable the achievement of specific system outcomes such as cost-effectiveness or administrative simplicity as well as program outcomes such as those based upon indicators of client well-being or safety. The specific design of the system can only be established once the outcomes to be achieved are known and clearly articulated. Design of the system should be research-based and data driven. This concept can be simply expressed as “form follows function.”
3. **Adequately Resourced:** As partners in the delivery of human services, the state Department of Human Services and counties must each be given the tools necessary to produce the intended outcomes. This includes, but is not limited to, access to appropriate funding, technology systems, and training.
4. **Administratively Simplified:** Redesign of the human services system must include the removal of low value-added administrative rules, mandates and other requirements that inhibit the ability of the state or counties to produce intended outcomes efficiently, cost-effectively, using evidence-based best practices. This can be accomplished through the enactment of a county charter (see MACSSA position on “State-County Results Accountability Initiative: New State-County Governance Model”).
5. **Locally-Defined:** As local units of government, counties are uniquely positioned to understand the needs of local residents and as such, are best positioned to define the specific partnerships that are necessary to achieve desired results. In some cases, this will result in the consolidation of county human service departments and/or shared service arrangements as some counties may find it more feasible to achieve specified results through a multi-county collaboration. Other counties may find success in achieving desired outcomes as a single administrative authority.

## THE PROPOSAL

Redesign is needed in each of three key areas to bring about the intended systems change in a balanced way. Like a three-legged stool, redesigning one leg of the stool without the other two will only cause greater imbalance in our system. Minnesota's human services funding and performance systems must be redesigned in order to arrive at effective structural changes.



### FINANCE REFORM

**Goal:** Assure *client access* to essential safety net services requires reform of the human services financing system in a way that promotes transparency, equity, *consistency*, and stability in how essential safety net services are funded at the local level. Finance Reform can be cost neutral to the state.

### SHARED ACCOUNTABILITY FOR PERFORMANCE

**Goal:** Create greater *accountability* for achieving specified *results* in the human services system requires the establishment of an effective performance management system. This includes:

- developing clear and appropriate performance outcomes;
- ensuring the state and counties have access to the tools necessary to gather and evaluate performance data;
- focusing on administrative simplification; and
- promoting opportunities for innovation and development of new best practices by granting counties greater flexibility through the use of waivers.

### STRUCTURAL REDESIGN

**Goal:** Redesign of the human services system must also include a commitment to explore new structures or models for shared services that would result in improved *efficiency* and *effectiveness*. However, the specific structural design of the system can only be established once the outcomes to be achieved are known and clearly articulated, and an effective performance management system is in place to accurately measure state-county performance. Furthermore, structure of the system should be research-based and data driven. This concept can be simply expressed as “form follows function.”