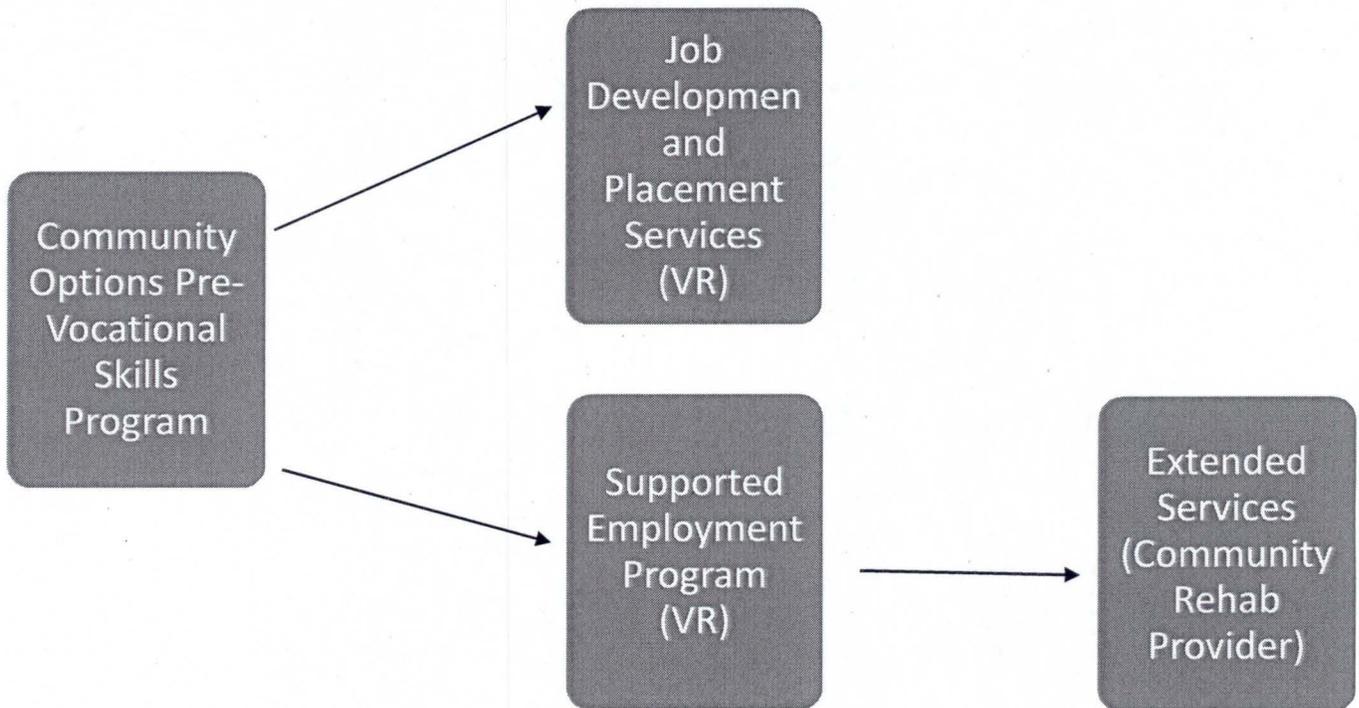


**Testimony
Human Services Interim Committee
October 8, 2014**

Good afternoon Chairman Damschen and members of the Committee. My name is Trina Gress, I am Vice President of Employment Services at Community Options, Inc. Community Options appreciates your ongoing efforts to address the needs and improve the services of individuals living with a brain injury in ND thus we support bill drafts 15.3016.01000 and 15.0311.01000.

In regards to bill draft 15.0311.01000, we ask that you do not lose sight of the larger issue, which is that individuals with brain injuries need Extended Services. See graph below. Extended Services are long term job supports from a job coach. Extended Services only come after a Supported Employment Program. Currently there are only 6 TBI Extended Services spots, and all 6 are taken. So a client is unable to move through the services as needed.

During the Biennium 2013-2015, thus far, Community Options has served 60 individuals in the Pre-Vocational skills program. Of those, 10 have been referred over to VR, but will likely not receive Extended Services because of the lack of Extended Services.



Community Options is advocating that you please consider a recommendation for your final report to include 100 addition Extended Services spots for the Beinnium 2015-2017. Whether the Extended Services are contracted by DHS or privately paid for, these services are an essential element to the employment success of an individual with a brain injury.

Thank you for your time, are there any questions?

Sincerely Submitted,

Trina Gress