

Community Options Delivering Supportive Employment Services in Utah

In March 2017, Community Options expanded its services to its 11th state, Utah. In a matter of just a few months, Community Options has already made noticeable progress in providing housing and employment supports to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

With over 20 years' experience working with people with disabilities and employment services, Shannon Wilkins was hired in May as the Director of Employment Services. Utilizing her knowledge of programs and established relationships with funding sources, Wilkins cultivated a relationship with the State of Utah's Vocational Rehabilitation Department and Division of Services for People with Disabilities to provide employment supports. Sharing the same progressive, inclusive philosophy as the state, Community Options obtained funded support for 23 individuals in the Salt Lake and Weber counties of Utah. One of those individuals has already found employment.

Keanu Unufe was about to turn 22 in May, resulting in a loss of state-provided support and a lack of formal programs. Upon his graduation from an extended education transition school, his teachers and Community Options searched for potential employment. After an assessment of Keanu's skills and abilities, assistance in creating a resume and practicing his interviewing skills and self-advocacy, he was offered an interview with Walmart as an Associate on May 15. With an impressive interview, Keanu was offered the job immediately and is currently making \$11 per hour. The minimum wage in Utah is \$7.25.

After learning the essential functions of his job, the Orem, UT native needs minimal support from his Community Options' job coach as he works 20 hour per week, five days a week. Well-liked by his supervisors and co-workers, Keanu has been a welcomed addition to the Walmart team.

Community Options is working to expand funding sources and work to be known as the premier provider for individuals with disabilities in Utah. To learn more about Community Options programs and services, visit www.comop.org.

###

About Community Options, Inc.:

For 28 years, Community Options has developed housing and employment programs for people with disabilities – serving thousands of people through over 40 offices across 11 states. Community Options provides advocacy assistance to empower people with disabilities because all people – regardless of ability level – should live and work in the community with dignity, choice and self-determination. For more information please visit our website: www.comop.org and to follow along with the ComOpCares campaign, search #ComOpCares on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.