**To the Counselors:**

Thank you for giving Project Love the opportunity to help one of your clients. We often need to ask additional questions as we review applications. Here are some of the more frequently asked questions, and some of the thoughts behind our concerns. Having you anticipate and address these questions will help to get faster approval.

* We want **YOU** to fill out the application after counseling the client.
* We want your assessment of the veracity of the client’s story as well as her sincerity about doing all she can to make good choices and commitments that will help provide for her family in the future.
* If it is possible to send a PDF or scan rather than photographing individual pages, it makes it much easier for us to review. And, if possible, scan the entire application in one scan (PDF) - not individual pages.

You can help speed the application process by anticipating these questions:

* If the address on her ID is not the same as the one on her lease or application, please verify that the client looks like the photo on the ID, and explain why there is a discrepancy.
* If there has been a recent stimulus check, or tax refund, or if the client is receiving child tax credits, tells us how much was received and how it was spent.
* Be sure that both the client’s and your own actual signatures appear on the appropriate pages of the application. We cannot accept electronic signatures.
* We hope that you will encourage your client to file child support application(s) with the State. Even if a father is living out-of-state, Illinois has a process to help locate him. Even if he is unemployed or in prison, starting the application now allows it to go into effect immediately, when he becomes employed.
* If a mom is working or planning to go back to work, we are interested in knowing who will provide childcare and at what cost.
* Please describe the current relationship between the client and the father of the baby.

Common budget questions/concerns:

* The expense line for food should include food stamp income. That is, if she gets $200 in food stamps and spends $100 more than that, the line item should read $300
* Diapers, etc. should be included on the food/groceries line
* Hair/nails/toiletries includes things like expenses related to the beauty shop, nail salon, and beauty and grooming supplies. This should ideally be a very low number—as should alcohol/tobacco expenses.
* For utilities, use an average monthly bill and address incurred late payments in your narrative. Be sure to send copies of bills, late notices, utility shut-offs, or eviction notices that relate to the payment you are seeking.
* If the mom is unemployed, and there is a high amount shown for gasoline and tolls, we will want to understand why.
* If there is an entry on the line for student loan/court mandated payment, we would like more information about it.