

11/28/2016

The Honorable Nikki R. Haley
Office of the Governor
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Governor Haley,

You stated in March 2016 that you wanted to recruit about 1500 more Foster Care Families and that your agencies were going to streamline the inspections and licensing of Foster homes. The state has more children in need than homes available for them and my husband and I cannot seem to get our application finished. We have been married for 10 years and have been trying to have children of our own with no luck. We decided that if we couldn't have our own children then we would love to help a child that needs a safe environment to live, even if for a short period of time. We called Heartfelt Calling organization in April 2016 to start the Foster Care Licensing process. In May we got our fingerprints done and had our first home visit. In June we did our Pre-servicing training and had our medical forms filled out. We had our fire inspection on August 2. We were told that the home passed the inspection but that we needed to add a carbon monoxide detector and have a lead inspection done on the home. They said that the lead inspection was needed because of the year it was built (even though it has been gutted and remodeled with 2 home appraisals effective dating the home for 2010). It was almost 2 months before we were contacted again and given the bad news that DHEC was not longer doing the lead inspections and they were not sure when DHEC or the fire department would be doing lead inspections. So we were given 3 choices: 1) Change the age range of the child we would foster, 2) Pay for a lead inspection ourselves, 3) Cancel our application. We had to make the decision right then, so we chose to cancel the application. So after 6 months of going through all that was asked of us, we were no closer to becoming Foster parents. It is not right that they give us a choice of age range for the child and then because they require a lead inspection but will not provide someone to do the inspection, we have to cancel our application. I know that we could have changed the age of the child to 6 or older, but we do not have children of our own and we felt like 5 and younger would be better for us. The potential foster parents should not have to go through all of this and then be told that you have to have a lead inspection and you as the potential foster parent have to pay for it. From two potential foster parents, it is disheartening to hear about all the kids that need a home and yet we have to cancel our application and start over just so that the case worker can close the case before the end of the year. You say you want more foster parents but you will never get them with the system that is in place now. If it is a state requirement, the system should provide the means to get it taken care of. Especially when the potential Foster parents have done everything that has been asked of them. As for me and my husband, we would still like to be Foster parents but feel that with this letter we may potentially be denied on a future application. If that happens, it is unfortunate but if this letter helps get the Foster Care system a little closer to being fixed and more kids are placed in loving homes then that is all that matters. All we really want is to provide a safe home for a child that needs it.

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