

## Oklahoma Department of Corrections – Victim Services Unit

### **APOLOGY BANK GUIDELINES**

A sincere apology letter helps to demonstrate that you regret the harm you have caused and that you are ready to accept responsibility for your crime. Your victim(s) may choose not to receive your letter or respond; however, writing the letter will help you identify your true feelings about yourself, the victim, and your crime. Please use the following questions for self-examination and use the guidelines to write your apology letter.

- Do you expect something from the Department of Corrections or others in return for your apology letter?
- Do you expect anything from your victim in return for your letter?
- The letter is voluntary and will not affect custody level, parole eligibility, release date or rules of supervision. The benefits to you are personal insight and growth.
- Do not ask the victim for forgiveness; if you are expecting the victim to forgive you or write you back, the letter is to benefit you and not the victim.
- Accept responsibility for your action and do not make any excuses. Examples are “I was high, drunk, etc” or “I had a rough childhood growing up....”.
- Do not blame the victim for the crime.
- The victim may like to hear what you are doing to change your lifestyle; however, do not make the entire letter about yourself.
- Do not force your religious beliefs on the victim; however, it is okay to tell the victim that your faith is helping you to make positive changes.
- Be brief, avoid long, rambling letters.
- If you feel that you need help in writing your apology letter, see your Victim Impact facilitator.
- It may be helpful to write your letter, set it aside for a few days, and then reread it. This will allow you to make changes.
- Be sure your hand writing is legible; print if necessary. Do not scribble out words; if you make errors that need to be corrected, please write on clean paper.