

Mission

The mission of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections' Victim Services Unit is to serve as the initial point of contact to assist victims and survivors of crime by providing information and resources in response to inquiries related to offenders; ensuring the opportunity for victim notification through the Victim Information and Notification Everyday (VINE) network; providing the opportunity for victim/offender dialogue, offering educational workshops and panels relating to the concerns of victims and their families, and opportunities for restorative justice that focuses on the needs of the victim, the responsibility of the offender and the role of the community in seeking the greatest level of restoration and healing possible.

Vision

The Oklahoma Department of Corrections is committed to assisting victims of crime by providing information related to the custody and status of offenders who are incarcerated or under the supervision of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections.

The 5 primary areas of focus

- Notification
- Advocacy
- Information / Support
- Victim / Offender Dialogue
- Impact Awareness Offender Programs



Oklahoma Department of Corrections Victim Services

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Oklahoma Department of Corrections *Victim Services*

The Apology Bank



The Apology Bank Process

The Apology Bank is a form of restorative justice that allows offenders who are incarcerated to write a letter of apology to their victim. The Apology Bank provides information to victims who would like an apology from the offender as a result of the crime committed against them or their families. The Apology Bank is a safe system for the victim to receive the letter of apology from the offender when and if desired.

This helpful tool is often the missing piece for some victims. For some victims an apology is all they need from their offender. Other victims may need an apology letter and much more, some victims have no interest in an apology letter as each victim's needs are different; each victim must be given the right to choose if they want the apology letter or not.

For the offender who writes a letter of apology it is often his/her attempt to communicate accountability, genuine remorse and acknowledgement for the pain caused by their crime. An apology letter should never be used to make excuses for their crime. Involvement in this process will not affect offenders' release date or other conditions of incarceration.

"A Safe Communication"

Process: Offenders who wish to participate in the Apology Bank program will need to meet the following criteria;

1. Successfully complete Victim Impact; Listen and Learn Program.
2. At the end of the course the offender will be provided the:
 - A. Apology Letter Guidelines
 - B. Apology Letter Request to participate
3. The letter will be mailed to the ODOC-VSU from the offender.
4. The VSU will review and check the letter for appropriateness.
5. All inappropriate letters will be returned to the offender.
6. An apology letter may be returned for the following but not limited to:
 - A. Blaming
 - B. Not accepting responsibility
 - C. Illegible handwriting
 - D. Protection order
 - E. Threatening victim
 - F. Not showing remorse

7. The District Attorney Victim Witness Coordinator in the County where the crime was committed will be contacted by the Oklahoma Department of Corrections Victim Services Unit to advise that an apology letter has been received for the victim.
8. The letter will be stored and sent upon the request of the victim.

