

TIPS FOR WRITING EFFECTIVE BONUS JUSTIFICATIONS

Bonus justifications align performance throughout the performance period with one or more bonus criteria. It is recommended that all justifications be clear and concise, free of errors, includes relevant performance examples, and articulate efforts and results/outcomes.

Submitting a bonus justification to your manager is not a requirement. However, employees are encouraged to submit a bonus justification for consideration at year-end to provide their perspective on their own performance as it relates to the bonus criteria. The information in this tip sheet is designed to provide guidance for preparing a well-written bonus justification.

PREPARE

- Review your **position description, job standards, and other expectations** to identify "successful" performance for your position and grade level.
- Refer to the **PMP bonus criteria and consideration factors** that describe types of performance are considered bonus-worthy. Carefully review the guidelines for applying the criteria to clearly understand the intent of the bonus criteria and consideration factors.
- Find and review any **performance documentation (emails, files, products)** you used to track your accomplishments. Your bonus justification should include examples of exceptional performance throughout the performance cycle.
- Locate any **kudos, written feedback, awards, or other recognition** you received from your manager, peers, and/or customers throughout the performance cycle.
- Review any individual, team, unit, or organizational goals and consider how you contributed to achieving those goals.
- Reflect on the purpose of your job and how it contributes to the FDIC's mission.

WRITE YOUR BONUS JUSTIFICATION

DOs

- Identify how you exceeded expectations, beyond what was expected for your position and grade level. A well-written bonus justification should:
 - ✓ Describe how your performance aligns with the bonus criteria and relevant consideration factors.
 - ✓ Include relevant performance examples to support your reasoning
 - ✓ Describe the impact of your contributions and achievements. What was your level of effort, and what was the outcome?
 - ✓ Include any obstacles/challenges you may have faced and how you overcame them.
 - ✓ Be clear and concise. Your bonus justification does not need to be lengthy to be effective.

DON'Ts

- Avoid listing tasks and activities. Focus on your level of effort, efficiency/productivity, quality, impact, obstacles overcome, extenuating circumstances, proactive behaviors, and the outcome.
- Avoid providing performance examples that describe quality work delivered on time; this is the expected level of performance. Include contributions and accomplishments that exceeded the expectations described in your position description and job standards.

REVIEW AND SUBMIT YOUR BONUS JUSTIFICATION

- Ask yourself:
 - ✓ Does the bonus justification convey my contributions for the year that exceeded the expectations described in my position description and job standards?
 - ✓ Does the bonus justification include relevant performance examples so my manager can follow how it aligns with bonus criteria and consideration factors?
 - ✓ Can my manager clearly identify my contributions and the outcome/results of my contributions from the information provided?
- Before submitting, review and edit your bonus justification as needed. Spelling or grammatical errors may diminish the impact.
- Consider submitting your bonus justification to your manager before the deadline. That way, if you need to make updates you have additional time.

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT

For more information, email the Performance Management Mailbox at Performancemanagement@FDIC.gov.