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# CFPB Takes Action Against Debt-Settlement Firm

## *Firm Charged Illegal Upfront Fees to Consumers*

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** — Today the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) announced that it has asked a federal district court to enter a consent order requiring Premier Consulting Group LLC to pay a fine of \$69,075 for charging consumers illegal upfront fees for debt-settlement services they never received, and take other steps to prevent future legal violations.

“These companies took advantage of consumers in financial distress, charging tens of thousands of dollars for services they failed to deliver,” said CFPB Director Richard Cordray. “Charging upfront fees for debt-settlement services is against the law, and today’s action is another reminder that these illegal practices will not be tolerated.”

In May 2013, the CFPB filed a complaint in federal district court against two debt-settlement service providers, Premier and Mission Settlement Agency, as well as several related entities, including the Law Office of Michael Lupolover, which is also named in today’s settlement. Premier and the Lupolover Firm are New Jersey-based firms with customers in multiple states. The CFPB alleged that the companies routinely charged consumers upfront fees before settling consumers’ debts. The illegal fees and the companies’ failures to provide effective services often caused consumers to fall further into debt and harm their credit history in the process. These practices violate the Federal Trade Commission’s Telemarketing Sales Rule, which the CFPB has the authority to enforce.

The United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York brought criminal charges against Mission Settlement, its owner, and related entities. In November 2014 the owner of Mission Settlement was sentenced to nine years in prison after pleading guilty to conspiracy charges of mail and wire

fraud. Earlier this year, the CFPB settled its civil case against Mission Settlement and its owner.

Under the terms of the settlement announced today, Premier will pay a civil penalty of \$69,075. That sum represents the amount of advance fees the companies took from consumers who did not have any debt settled. Premier and the Lupolover Firm will also be prohibited from any future violations of the Telemarketing Sales Rule. Consumers who were harmed by these violations may be eligible for relief from the CFPB's Civil Penalty Fund in the future.

A copy of the proposed consent order is available here:[http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201412\\_cfpb-cfpb-v-premier-consulting-group-et-al-proposed-stipulated-final-judgment-and-order.pdf](http://files.consumerfinance.gov/f/201412_cfpb-cfpb-v-premier-consulting-group-et-al-proposed-stipulated-final-judgment-and-order.pdf)

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*The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau is a 21st century agency that helps consumer finance markets work by making rules more effective, by consistently and fairly enforcing those rules, and by empowering consumers to take more control over their economic lives. For more information, visit [consumerfinance.gov](http://consumerfinance.gov).*