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 BBB Advises Contractors To Avoid Firms That Charge \$99 Advance Fee For Job Leads

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Advises Contractors To Avoid Firms That Charge \$99 Advance Fee For Job Leads

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St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 11, 2012 – The [Better Business Bureau](#) (BBB) is urging contractors in Missouri, Illinois and across the nation to be alert for telephone solicitors trying to convince them to sign up for an online program offering free job leads.



Several contractors report that after paying a \$99 background screening fee, they got no work and often were unable to contact anyone with the company.

The BBB suggests caution when dealing with **Construction Crews** (constructioncrews.net), **Contractor Support Management** (contractorsupportonline.com), **Commercial Crews** (commercialcrews.com), or any of several other construction lead companies requiring upfront fees to screen prospective contractors.

Most of the companies appear to be based in California. One St. Louis area contractor said he was solicited as recently as two weeks ago.

A cleaning and debris removal contractor from St. Louis said he signed up for a similar program about a year ago through Contractor Support Management. After paying the \$99 fee, he received no leads and was never able to reach a company representative.

Contractor Support Management, of North Hollywood, Calif., has an “F” grade with the BBB, the lowest grade possible. It has received more than 100 complaints, the vast majority from contractors who said they received nothing for their money.

A St. Charles Mo., electrical contractor said a salesman from Construction Crews of San Jose, Calif., phoned him two weeks ago. He told the BBB that the salesman said the \$99 screening fee would give him weekly access to contracting jobs on foreclosed bank properties. The St. Charles contractor said he decided against joining the program because “I didn’t feel real comfortable.”

Attempts to reach representatives of Construction Crews, Commercial Crews

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or Contractor Support Management were unsuccessful, despite calls to several phone numbers listed by the firms. The BBB could find no evidence that any of the companies were registered in California.

Michelle Corey, BBB president and CEO, said salespeople promising to deliver leads to contractors in exchange for a \$99 administrative fee may be part of a scheme to take advantage of legitimate business people struggling to earn a living. "More often than not, these are hard working men and women looking for an honest day's pay for an honest day's work. For somebody to trick them out of \$100 isn't right."

Complaints involving Contractor Support Management have come from across Missouri, including St. Louis, Florissant, Bloomsdale, Rolla, Stockton and Kansas City. Illinois complaints are from the northern part of the state.

The websites for Construction Crews and Commercial Crews are virtually identical, with the exception of the companies' names. Both sites list the same address in California and the same testimonials. The BBB could not confirm that contractors offering testimonials on the websites are legitimate businesses.

The BBB offers the following advice for companies seeking business leads:

- Beware of phone or email solicitations asking for upfront fees to join lead programs. Complaints have shown that many of these solicitations are scams.
- Ask for references and contact them.
- Get [BBB Business Reviews](#) by contacting the BBB at www.bbb.org or by calling 314-645-3300.

Contacts: Michelle Corey, President & CEO, 314-584-6800, mcorey@stlouisbbb.org, or Chris Thetford, Vice President-Communications, 314-584-6743 or 314-681-4719 (cell), communications@stlouisbbb.org, or Bill Smith, 314-584-6727, tpc1@stlouisbbb.org.

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