



This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Reproductions and distribution of this news story are strictly prohibited.

---

CFP Board Omits 'Volumes' Of Negative Information About Mark Holders, WSJ Says  
**JULY 30, 2019 • KAREN DEMASTERS**

The Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, which oversees the coveted CFP designation, omits volumes of negative information about its mark holders from its public website, the Wall Street Journal said in a scathing expose published Tuesday.

The CFP Board maintains a directory, LetsMakeAPlan, on its website that is meant to help the public find qualified planners. However, it does not tell searchers about criminal charges filed against CFP mark holders, client complaints or other actions that could affect their work.

The LetsMakeAPlan.org directory includes two types of financial-planner red flags: discipline imposed by the CFP Board or a bankruptcy disclosure within the past 10 years. These affected just 573 of the CFPs listed on the site as of June, the Wall Street Journal said. There are almost 85,000 CFPs in the United States.

The Securities and Exchange Commission, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority, the Department of Justice and state regulatory authorities oversee the financial industry and have the authority to ban planners from the financial industry, or take other action against violators, including sentencing them to jail or fining them for criminal and civil violations of laws. LetsMakeAPlan does not list violations found by the other organizations.

The CFP Board, on the other hand, imposes three types of punishment on advisors: permanent revocation of the right to use the CFP mark, temporary suspension of the right to use the mark and letters of admonition. The punishments usually are imposed when advisors fail to notify the board of actions taken against them by others, or when they fail to respond to CFP Board inquiries about complaints.

The Journal research found numerous advisors who are listed on the LetsMakeAPlan web page with no notation that they might have problems, when, in fact, they have been subject of charges by other authorities or complaints by investors, or they have filed for bankruptcies.

The CFP Board will hold a press conference at 3:45 P.M. Tuesday to answer the allegations in the story.

“Among the planners the Journal’s analysis flagged, more than 5,000 have faced formal complaints from their clients over investment recommendations or sales practices, and hundreds have been disciplined by financial regulators or left brokerage firms amid allegations of misconduct. At least 140 faced or currently face felony charges, including one who pleaded no contest to a charge of possessing child pornography,” the Journal said.

The CFP Board touts its designation as a high standard for advisors to attain and for the public to use in its selection of planners. It recently revamped its [Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct](#). The new rules go into effect Oct. 1.

---

This copy is for your personal, non-commercial use only. Reproductions and distribution of this news story are strictly prohibited.

- [View reprint options](#)
- [Order a reprint article now](#)
- [Print](#)