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## News Releases

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JULY 26, 2011 SEATTLE, WA

### **Costco Wholesale Corporation becomes ICE IMAGE partner**

SEATTLE — One of the nation's largest retailers is partnering with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) to strengthen its hiring practices and help ensure it is employing a legal workforce.

Costco Wholesale Corporation, based in Issaquah, Wash., officially became a member of ICE's Mutual Agreement between Government and Employers (IMAGE) during a signing ceremony Tuesday. IMAGE is a voluntary program that allows private sector businesses to partner with ICE to reduce unauthorized employment and the use of fraudulent identity documents. As a result, a participating employer is able to maintain a more secure, stable workforce.

"I am pleased to welcome Costco Wholesale Corporation as an IMAGE partner," said Leigh Winchell, ICE Homeland Security Investigations special agent in charge in Seattle. "This action sends a strong message to the millions of Americans who do business with Costco that the company places a priority on hiring and employing a legal workforce."

When a company pursues IMAGE membership, ICE provides education and training on proper hiring procedures, including employment screening tools such as E-Verify and the Social Security Number Verification Services. The company also undergoes an audit of its I-9 forms to ensure current employees are eligible to work in the United States.

The E-Verify program, administered by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, allows businesses to verify that newly hired employees are eligible to work in the United States. This web-based program, available in all 50 states at no cost to employers, provides an automated link to the Social Security Administration database and Department of Homeland Security immigration records.

Under IMAGE, which was initiated in 2006, ICE partners with employers in a wide range of industries, including employment services, aviation, transportation, construction, high technology, shipping and manufacturing. Currently, more than 100 businesses nationwide are IMAGE members.

Costco currently operates 428 warehouses in the United States and Puerto Rico and employs more than 140,000 people, including seasonal workers. It is the 13th company to join IMAGE statewide.

Employers interested in learning more about IMAGE membership may contact the local IMAGE coordinator by calling 206-442-2200 or by visiting [www.ice.gov/image/](http://www.ice.gov/image/) (<http://www.ice.gov/image/>).

You may also visit us on [Facebook \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.facebook.com/wwicegov), [Twitter \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://twitter.com/wwicegov) and [YouTube \(http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwicegov\)](http://www.ice.gov/exec/leaving.asp?url=http://www.youtube.com/wwicegov), or access this news release on your [mobile device](#).

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U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) is the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security.

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