



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF  
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**National  
Telecommunications &  
Information  
Administration**

## **Commerce's NTIA Announces Nearly 40 Million Coupons Requested and 16 Million Redeemed from TV Converter Box Coupon Program**

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WASHINGTON--The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) today announced that more than 40 million coupons have been requested, and more than 16 million coupons have been redeemed, to date, from the TV Converter Box Coupon Program.

“NTIA is closely monitoring coupon statistics and working closely with all stakeholders to ensure a successful transition. November was the busiest month for the Coupon Program and December seems to be even busier,” said Acting NTIA Administrator Meredith Baker. “NTIA is in constant communication with the Administration, Capitol Hill, the DTV Transition Coalition and other stakeholders to ensure that relevant information, such as Coupon Program demand, can form the basis for any necessary adjustments to the Program.”

Consumers, who rely on an antenna to receive free television channels and want a \$40 coupon to purchase a converter box to keep their TV set working, need to apply for their coupons no later than the end of the year, if they want to receive their coupon prior to the February 17, 2009, deadline. NTIA administers the TV Converter Box Coupon Program permitting all households to request up to two coupons - each worth \$40 - toward the purchase of certified converter boxes.

Also, NTIA hosted on Monday more than 25 federal agencies to further coordinate efforts to educate vulnerable Americans about the February 17, 2009, deadline to transition to digital television and the TV Converter Box Coupon Program. During the meeting, NTIA and the Federal Communications Commission officials provided updates on their coordinated consumer education activities and other federal agency officials discussed immediate action needed to be taken to urge unprepared consumers to get ready now. The Federal partners also met as a group in January at the Commerce Department and in September at the White House.

### **Background**

The Digital Television Transition and Public Safety Act of 2005 requires full-power television stations to cease analog broadcasts and switch to digital after February 17, 2009. The Act authorizes NTIA to create the TV Converter Box Coupon Program, which is funded by the \$19 billion airwaves auction and not tax dollars. The Act funded the Program at \$1.5 billion, including \$1.34 billion for coupons. Currently, NTIA has obligated \$1.1 billion in coupons. This obligation is a combination of coupons redeemed as well as coupons that have been ordered.

Digital broadcast television offers consumers a clearer picture, more programming choices and will free up the airwaves for better communications among emergency first responders and new telecommunications services.

Consumers receiving free, over-the-air television on analog televisions will need to act now to ensure their televisions continue to work when full power television stations go all-digital. Viewers of over-the-air television need to look at each analog set in their home that is not connected to cable, satellite or other pay television service and make a timely decision. They can connect their television to cable, satellite or pay television service; they can replace it with a digital TV; or they may keep it working with a TV converter box.

For consumers choosing the converter box option, the TV Converter Box Coupon Program permits all households to request up to two coupons - each worth \$40 - toward the purchase of certified converter boxes. Coupons may be requested until March 31, 2009, or while supplies last, and only one coupon can be used to purchase each coupon-eligible converter box. Consumers can purchase a converter box at one of the more than 34,500 participating local, phone or online retailers. Consumers will receive a list of eligible converter boxes and participating retailers with their coupons. Coupon applications can take several weeks to process and mail so consumers opting to purchase a converter box should act now, and should call stores before shopping to ensure the desired converter box is available. Converter boxes generally cost between \$40 and \$80 and coupons expire 90 days from the date they are mailed.

Consumers who choose to transition to digital television by purchasing a TV converter box with a coupon need to follow three steps and act by the end of the year because the process may take six weeks. Consumers should immediately apply for their coupons, buy a converter box when the coupons arrive, and try the box with their television to address any potential technical issues before full-power broadcasters switch to digital.

Some viewers watch programs over translators or other low-power stations which may continue broadcasting analog signals after February 17, 2009. Those viewers may wish to select a converter box that will pass through analog signals.

Households may apply now for coupons online at [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov), by phone at 1-888-DTV-2009 (1-888-388-2009), via fax at 1-877-DTV-4ME2 (1-877-388-4632) or by mail to P.O. Box 2000, Portland, OR 97208-2000. Deaf or hard of hearing callers may dial 1-877-530-2634 (English TTY) or 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish TTY). Nursing home residents may apply with the paper application available downloadable at [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov).

For more information about the Coupon Program, please visit [www.DTV2009.gov](http://www.DTV2009.gov) and for questions about the DTV transition, go to [www.dtv.gov](http://www.dtv.gov) or call 1-888-CALL-FCC.

NTIA is responsible for the development of the domestic and international telecommunications policy of the Executive Branch.

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