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**National  
Telecommunications &  
Information  
Administration**

## **Commerce's NTIA Awards \$2.7 Million to National Association of Area Agencies on Aging to Help Seniors Transition to Digital TV**

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**WASHINGTON**—The Commerce Department's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) announced today an award of \$2.7 million to the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) to help seniors transition to digital television through the TV Converter Box Coupon Program. Full-power TV broadcasters switch from analog to 100 percent digital broadcasts after February 17, 2009.

"Vulnerable consumers will be helped with the technical assistance that n4a will provide," said Meredith Baker, acting NTIA administrator. "They have the right mix of capacity, skills and experience—as well as trust and standing among seniors—to lead this effort to help older adults transition to digital television."

The association will assist seniors with completing a coupon application, obtaining a converter box and connecting the device to a television in the home now to the end of April. They are partnering with credible and effective organizations, together forming the Keeping Seniors Connected (KSC) Coalition. These include the Meals on Wheels Association of America, the National Association for Hispanic Elderly, the National Asian Pacific Center on Aging and the National Caucus and Center on Black Aged. The association recently served as the lead national organization on a \$5 million contract, successfully coordinating assistance in promoting Medicare Part D enrollment.

"With extensive outreach in communities across the country, the Keeping Seniors Connected organizations will reinforce the efforts of the NTIA and their contractors by directly disseminating customized, targeted information about the transition to these vulnerable populations," said Sandy Markwood, CEO of the National Association of Area Agencies on Aging. "Most importantly, n4a will then offer seniors the direct, one-on-one assistance that most will need in order to make a smooth transition to DTV."

NTIA is working with more than 300 federal and private organizations to ensure a smooth digital TV transition for America's seniors and other households. Also, NTIA's consumer education effort, including the "apply, buy and try" campaign to urge consumers to request coupons before the end of the year, is proving effective. To date, more than 18 million households have requested more than 35 million coupons, and more than 14 million coupons have been redeemed.

## **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.

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 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. Consumers can purchase a converter box at one of the more than 35,000 participating local, phone or online retailers. 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 \$45 and \$80 and coupons expire 90 days from the date they are mailed.

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).

Consumers will receive a list of eligible converter boxes and participating retailers with their coupons. Coupons expire 90 days after they are mailed, and only one coupon can be used to purchase each coupon-eligible converter box.

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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