



Milton Brown
Deputy Chief Counsel

U.S. Department of Commerce
National Telecommunications and Information Administration

Presentation Overview

- 1) Digital Television Transition
- 2) TV Converter Box Coupon Program Overview
- 3) Raising Consumer Awareness
- 4) Participating in the Program



PART 1

THE DIGITAL TELEVISION TRANSITION



3

Historic Transition to Digital TV

- After February 17, 2009, all full-power television stations will stop broadcasting in analog and switch to 100% digital broadcasting
- Digital broadcasting is more efficient
- Broadcasters require less of the airwaves to provide a better TV viewing experience



4

Transition Benefits Consumers

“Freed up” spectrum will provide important benefits to consumers and communities

- Improved TV picture and sound quality
- Additional program channels
- Enhanced public-safety communications



5

The Digital Transition Underway

- Most TV stations are already broadcasting in digital
- Consumers with digital TV or older TV connected to a converter box can receive digital pictures and more channels
- Over half of all households (56%) have a digital TV
- Takes time to prepare for the transition
- So don't wait



6

NTIA's Role in the Transition

- Congress has directed NTIA to administer a variety of assistance programs
- Programs to help with communications equipment for police and firefighters as well as conversion devices for smaller broadcasters to ease their transition
- \$1.5 billion for consumers who wish to keep their older TVs working after February 17, 2009



7

PART 2

TV CONVERTER BOX COUPON PROGRAM



8

Consumers Affected

Consumers who use “rabbit ears” or a rooftop antenna with an older model television must take prompt action to continue receiving TV broadcasts after February 17, 2009



9

Who Is Most Affected?

- About 9.5 million U.S. households are not prepared for the digital transition as of Sept. 30
- These households on average are more likely to be:
 - Minorities
 - Seniors
 - Disabled Americans
 - Rural residents
 - Economically disadvantaged persons



10

Consumer Choices

- Antenna-TV Households have three options to make the switch
 - 1) Connect to cable, satellite or other pay TV service
 - 2) Purchase a digital TV
 - 3) Buy a converter box that plugs into your existing TV to keep it working
- Consumers choosing option #3 should apply without delay



11

Who Needs a Converter Box?

- All households are eligible for the Coupon Program
- TV sets connected to cable or satellite service do not require a converter box from this Program
- TV sets that are already digital do not require a converter box
- Supply of coupons is limited



12

“Apply, Buy and Try” Campaign

- Consumers should **apply** without delay and allow themselves 6 weeks to prepare
- Consumers should research the converter boxes and promptly **buy** the one that’s right for them
- Consumers should **try** the converter box right away by plugging it in to their TV set



13

Applying for Coupons Is Easy

- Consumers can apply for coupons online, by phone, mail or fax
- Minimal information requested on the application
- Should take a matter of minutes to apply – it’s easy!
- Over **40 million** coupons have already been requested through December 10, 2008



14

Coupon Program Basics

- Request between Jan 1, 2008 and Mar 31, 2009 or while supplies last
- Coupons worth up to \$40 each
- Maximum of 2 coupons may be requested per U.S. household
- Coupons can only be used to purchase certified TV converter boxes
- Coupons are free
- Coupons expire 90 days after mailed and cannot be replaced or reissued. Keep them safe.



15

Getting Your Coupon Card

- Coupons look like plastic gift cards
- Coupons are sent via U.S. mail
- Insert includes list of nearby retailers, converter boxes and FAQs



16

Buying Your Converter Box

- Over **16 million** coupons redeemed for converter boxes thru end of November
- Consumers pay difference between the coupon value (\$40) and the price of the converter box, plus the tax
- Converter boxes retail around \$50 to \$60
- To assist consumers, coupons can be redeemed in a variety of ways – at large and small retailers, online and thru a toll-free order line



17

Making Program Accessible

- Nursing home residents are eligible for coupons
- NTIA has made application and web page large print
- Application available in 14 languages
- We have enlisted partners, such as AARP, Retirement Living, HHS Administration on Aging, National Association of Area Agencies on Aging, and the National Council on Aging, to help get the word out and provide technical assistance
- Retailers in the program include places where target populations normally shop, such as Wal-mart, Kmart and Sears.



18

Seniors and the DTV Transition

- NTIA is sponsoring application sign-up days at community centers and in places of worship
- Program is flexible to help seniors, or their caregivers, pick up converter boxes
- CEA and FCC have developed tools to help with installation



19

Coupon Program Fully Accessible

- TTY number in English and Spanish
- Braille applications available upon request
- Cards are embossed with unique number sequence
- Working with American Council of the Blind, Hearing Loss Association of America and American Association of People with Disabilities to get the word out
- Converter box features generally expand TV options for people with disabilities



20

PART 3

RAISING CONSUMER AWARENESS



21

Consumer Education Campaign

- Goal: Educate U.S. residents who rely on over-the-air broadcasts about the digital transition and the TV Converter Box Coupon Program
- Primary Outreach Elements:
 - Develop customizable messages and materials
 - Conduct comprehensive earned media outreach
 - Engage and support partners
 - Coordinate efforts with private sector and other government agencies



22

Key Information for Consumers

- Conducted 18 focus groups in October 2007
- Participants represented general consumers and target populations
- Key information to communicate:
 - Converter box one-time cost
 - Benefit of a clearer picture
 - “Discount” coupon
 - Approximate out-of-pocket cost to consumer
 - Two coupons per household
 - Coupons will be mailed
 - Limited supply
 - Expire after 90 days



23

Consumer Awareness Growing

- 92% of public aware of the DTV transition
- NTIA has conducted numerous media interviews and has earned 657 million media impressions since Sept 07
- We have engaged over 300 partners in every state
- Commercial broadcasters say every household in American will see DTV transition advertisement 152 times before Feb 09



24

PART 4

PARTICIPATING IN THE COUPON PROGRAM



25

www.DTV2009.gov

- The official TV Converter Box Coupon Program Web site
 - Apply for coupons
 - Download customizable materials
 - Find background on the transition and FAQs on the Coupon Program
 - Check coupon application status
 - Locate a Converter Box Retailer near you



26

1-888-DTV-2009

(1-888-388-2009)

- The official Coupon Program hotline
 - Automated system takes coupon requests
 - Accessible for hearing impaired:
 - 1-877-530-2634 (English TTY)
 - 1-866-495-1161 (Spanish TTY)



27

Turnkey Materials

- Informational materials available for downloading and co-branding in English and Spanish at DTV2009.gov
 - Program brochures
 - Poster
 - Mail Stuffer
 - Web banners
 - Complete partner toolkit
 - Coupon Program 101 PowerPoint presentation
 - Print and radio PSAs
 - Sample newsletter articles



28

Helping Family and Friends

- **Help someone obtain a coupon**
consumers can donate a coupon to someone in need
- **Help someone get a converter box**
coupons are transferrable and can be used by caregivers at retail store
- **Help someone connect a converter box**
NTIA working with trusted groups to help install converter boxes for vulnerable populations



29

Keeping Up to Date

- Quarterly newsletters and conference calls to keep supporters informed and share information
 - Program updates from NTIA
 - Share success stories and best practices
 - Learn about important dates and new materials
 - Q&A sessions and “webinars” about the Coupon Program
 - Email or call D’Neisha Simmons Jendayi at dneisha.simmonsjendayi@ketchum.com or 202-835-8800



30

Sample Educational Activities

- **Training:** Provide relevant staff with training on the Coupon Program and how to apply
- **Links:** Place Coupon Program web banner on your web site and link to www.DTV2009.gov
- **Direct Outreach:** Disseminate Coupon Program informational materials during on-the-ground direct, personal outreach to constituents
- **Collaboration:** Seek opportunities to work with organizations with which you have an existing relationship, such as libraries, school systems, and places of worship



31

Thank You!

Contact Information

Mary Lou Kenny

mkenny@ntia.doc.gov

202-482-9114

or

D'Neisha Simmons Jendayi

dneisha.simmonsjendayi@ketchum.com

202-835-8800



32