

TV Goes Digital

How the Federal Government is Helping with the Transition

Multifamily Housing's Office of Housing Assistance and Grant Administration is making the following information available to assist in the Federal effort to alert the public to the digital television transition taking place February 17, 2009. On this date, all full-power broadcast television stations in the United States will begin to broadcast only in digital.

Who will be affected?

For Americans who already own a digital television or subscribe to cable, satellite or other pay service, the transition will have little or no impact. However, more than 13 million U.S. households rely on over-the-air (OTA) broadcasts on their analog television sets exclusively. Consumers who, on average, more exclusively rely on OTA analog TV broadcasts include older Americans, minorities (African American, Hispanic, Asian American, and Native American), rural residents, low-income individuals and people with disabilities. These populations also tend to rely heavily on television to keep them informed in times of emergency and cannot afford to lose their connection to television broadcasts.

Transition Options

U.S. households that rely solely on OTA analog TV for their television viewing need to understand that the transition will occur on February 17, 2009. They must take action before this date in order to continue receiving television broadcasts on their analog TVs. These households have the following options to choose from:

- Buy a converter box that will plug into their analog TV.
- Buy a TV with a digital tuner.
- Connect their analog TV to cable, satellite or other pay service.

Federal Government Coupon Program

For consumers who decide a converter box is their preferred option, the Federal Government is offering U.S. households up to two \$40 coupons to help pay the cost of up to two certified converter boxes. These converter boxes decode the digital signal back to analog for display on analog TV sets, enabling them to keep working after the digital transition.

The TV Converter Box Coupon Program is administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce's National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NITA). Consumers may request coupons between January 1, 2008 and March 31, 2009 through a toll-free customer support center, a Web site, fax, and through the mail. Coupons will be sent to households via U.S. mail and may be redeemed at participating retailers throughout the nation.

What can owners and management agents do?

Owners and management agents of HUD-subsidized multifamily properties can post the attachments to this listserv message and/or distribute them to their residents to provide them with the knowledge needed in preparation for the February 17, 2009, digital TV implementation date. The attachments are as follows:

- Will Your TV Work Next Year?* - Flyer describing transition, if a converter box is needed and converter box coupon details
- Converter Box Coupon Information Application* - For mailing and instructions on how to apply by other methods

- Digital Tips** - Instructions on setting up the converter box

Further information can be obtained from the following website:

www.DTV2009.gov

* Information provided by the U.S. Department of Commerce

** Information provided by www.DigitalTips.org

<<Will Your TV Work Next Year.pdf>> <<Converter Box Coupon Application.pdf>> <<Digital Tips.pdf>>
