



Advocacy. Action. Answers on Aging.

National Association of Area Agencies on Aging

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 21, 2008

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n4a and *Keep Seniors Connected* Coalition Awarded \$2.7 million by NTIA

The National Association of Area Agencies on Aging (n4a) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a cooperative agreement on behalf of the *Keep Seniors Connected* (KSC) Coalition for \$2.7 million from the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA), U.S. Department of Commerce, to help older persons transition to digital television. KSC Coalition partners in the project include the Asociacion Nacional Pro Personas Mayores, Meals on Wheels of America, National Association of Nutrition and Aging Service Programs, National Association of State Units on Aging, National Caucus on Black Aged, National Council on Aging, National Pacific Center on Aging, and AARP.

On February 17, 2009, the nation will switch from over-the-air analog to digital broadcasting. Current data suggest that at least eight million older adults rely on analog television sets and over-the-air television signals. Without proper education and hands-on assistance throughout the conversion to digital, millions of older adults could find that their televisions go dark on February 17.

“Older adults often have older TVs that will require converter boxes to receive the digital signal. Seniors on limited budgets or with mobility limitations may face transportation hurdles in getting to the store to obtain the converter boxes,” said Sandy Markwood, n4a’s CEO. “And, even if older adults are able to acquire a box, for many it will be a challenge to get it connected and understand how to use the new technology.”

n4a and its partners will work with local community-based aging organizations to directly disseminate customized, targeted information to these vulnerable populations. “Most importantly, however, they will help older consumers apply for the \$40 converter box coupon, obtain a converter box from a local participating retailer, and connect the device to a television in the home,” stated Markwood.

The Coalition expects to provide outreach/education and one-to-one assistance to 250,000 older persons. n4a and the partner organizations will be collaborating with NTIA in selecting the geographic locations for funding support based on NTIA’s criteria, including the aging demographic data for its designated “red zones”.

According to Acting NTIA administrator, Meredith Baker, “Vulnerable consumers will be helped with the technical assistance that n4a and its partners will provide. 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 National Association of Area Agencies on Aging’s (n4a) primary mission is to build the capacity of its members to help older persons and persons with disabilities live with dignity and choices in their homes and communities for as long as possible. For more information, visit www.n4a.org.