New X9 Forum, Open to All, Will Determine Best Path To Modernize USDA SNAP/Food Stamp Cards

ANNAPOLIS, Md. – June 27, 2023 -- The Accredited Standards Committee X9 Inc. (X9) today announced that it has kicked off a new Industry Forum to investigate how best to modernize the EBT cards for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), formerly known as food stamps. X9 develops and maintains the ANSI standard that governs the processing of SNAP cards and is seeking participants for the new initiative. Participation in an X9 industry forum does not require a paid X9 membership.

The purpose of this forum is to provide a collaborative environment to examine issues related to upgrading the SNAP EBT card to a chip card, along with updates for mobile payments, such as NFC (Near Field Communication), and SNAP's Electronic Healthy Food Incentive Program (eHIP), which makes fruits and vegetables more affordable. The group will collectively determine the optimal path to surmount identified challenges and achieve these goals.

SNAP EBT Card Modernization Forum participants are expected to be drawn from stakeholders associated with the issuance, processing and redemption of SNAP benefits, which include the USDA, state agencies, retailers, card processors, hardware and software vendors, and others.

The members of the forum will research different options for implementing a SNAP chip card, mobile/NFC payments and eHIP. When the group has worked through and reached consensus on the issues related to upgrading SNAP cards, it will then make recommendations to the X9 working group responsible for the ASC X9.58 standard that controls the SNAP card. This standard, *X9.58 Financial transaction messages -- Electronic benefits transfer (EBT) -- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and cash benefit programs*, provides parties involved in EBT transactions for these programs with technical specifications for exchanging financial transaction messages between an acquirer and an EBT card issuer processor.

An X9 industry forum is a group of industry representatives who can provide a comprehensive perspective on an issue assigned to the forum. A forum may include both X9 members and non-members and will be managed by X9. An industry forum is not authorized to develop ANSI-

defined documents, e.g., standards or technical reports, which is why the SNAP card forum's recommendations will be delivered to an X9 member working group.

"The SNAP program has historically provided benefits to low-income families to supplement their grocery budgets, so that they can afford the nutritious food essential to health and well-being," said X9 Executive Director Steve Stevens. "We now have the opportunity to design a new generation of SNAP cards, to add the benefit of secure mobile transactions along with incentives for including fresh produce in families' meals. This modernization will enhance the benefit of SNAP to recipients while also streamlining card processing."

Prospective participants may indicate their interest on the X9 website.

About the Accredited Standards Committee X9 Inc.
The Accredited Standards Committee X9 Inc. is a non-profit organization accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) to develop and maintain national and – through ISO -- international standards for the financial services industry. The subjects of X9's standards include: retail, mobile and business payments; corporate treasury functions; block chain technology; processing of electronic legal orders issued to financial institutions; tracking of financial transactions and instruments; financial transaction messaging (ISO 8583 and 20022); quantum computing; AI, PKI; checks; cloud; data breach notification and more.

X9 acts as the U.S. Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for ISO TC68 (Financial) and TC321 (E-Commerce) and performs the secretariat functions for ISO TC68. Please visit our website (www.x9.org) for more information.

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