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Ishbel Dickens, advocate for manufactured homeowners, honored for Lifetime Achievement in affordable housing

SEATTLE—The Washington State Housing Finance Commission has honored Ishbel Dickens with a lifetime achievement award for her work on behalf of manufactured home communities.

“For 27 years, Ishbel has worked tirelessly to help and advocate for the state’s 75,000 households who live in manufactured home communities,” said Karen Miller, chair of the Housing Finance Commission. “She has given these homeowners a powerful voice to determine their own futures.”

Presented Wednesday in a ceremony at the 21st annual Housing Washington conference in Tacoma, the Margaret M. Sevy Affordable Housing Lifetime Achievement Award honors vision, leadership and impact on affordable housing over a sustained period.

Dickens helped establish the [Washington Association of Manufactured Home Owners](#) in 2006 and is currently the executive director of the [National Manufactured Home Owners Association](#).

Her activism was sparked in 1987, when she volunteered to collect signatures to prevent the closure of a mobile-home park in North Seattle.

She earned a law degree from the University of Washington so she could better assist manufactured homeowners, who are particularly vulnerable because they rent the land beneath their homes. When the land is sold, the rent gets too high, or the landlord refuses to maintain common areas, they face the threat of being displaced with no ability to gain any equity from their largest asset, their home.

Dickens’s work has resulted in \$4 million from the state Housing Trust Fund for manufactured home communities and, in 2006, legislation that created the Manufactured Housing Dispute Resolution Program.

Recent achievements include zoning ordinances in Snohomish County, Marysville, Lynnwood and Tumwater that have benefitted more than 3,000 households, and Dickens is working to enact similar measures in Federal Way, Spokane, and Bellingham to benefit 3,000 more households.

“I’m honored and humbled to accept this award,” Dickens said. “Manufactured home owners are an amazing group of people—working constantly to preserve their little piece of the American dream, often in difficult and heartbreaking circumstances. That’s why this work is so important to me.”

At the conference, the Commission also presented the 2014 Friend of Housing awards to [six leaders and advocates](#). *Learn more about the [awards](#) and the [Housing Washington conference](#)...*



Ishbel Dickens receives the Margaret M. Sevy Affordable Housing Lifetime Achievement Award at the 21st annual Housing Washington conference in Tacoma.
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Now in its 31st year, the [Washington State Housing Finance Commission](#) is a publicly accountable, self-supporting team that works with lenders, investors, developers, nonprofit organizations and more to bring private investment dollars to benefit families and achieve public goals throughout Washington. The Commission has created and preserved affordable homes for more than 275,000 people across the state, while contributing more than \$42.5 billion and 240,000 jobs to the economy. [@WSHFC](#) [Facebook.com/WSHFC](#)