

# BEHCHOKÒ

Tłı̨chq̨ Community Government

Population (2025): **2,017**

Indigenous Population (2025): **93%**

Households (2024): **494**

Owned/Rented (2024): **57% / 43%**

Average Family Income (2024): **\$116,625**

Not Adequate (2024): **36%**

Not Affordable (2024): **9%**

Not Suitable (2024): **26%**

Core Housing Need (2024): **31%**

Public Housing Waitlist (Dec. 2025):  
**159 households**



*A starting point for a brighter future*

## THE COMMUNITY

Behchokò is the largest Dene community in the NWT, and the regional hub and largest community of the Tłı̨chq̨ region. It has a 2025 estimated population of 2,017 residents, which has remained fairly consistent with some small increases and decreases over recent years. The population is 92.6% Indigenous. Behchokò consists of three distinct communities—Rae, Edzo, and Frank Channel (or Dehk'è)—connected by the Rae Access Road and Highway 3, with a bridge at Frank Channel. Rae—originally known as Fort Rae and established at the current location in the early 20th century—is the larger and original community, located on the shore of Marian Lake. Edzo was a federal government-planned new community from the 1950's located between Marian Lake and the North Arm of Great Slave Lake, that was intended to address sanitary concerns in Rae. However, most families chose to remain in Rae, and it remains much larger than Edzo, though Chief Jimmy Bruneau High School is located in Edzo. Frank Channel consists of a small number of homes and cabins along either side of the channel connecting Marian and Great Slave Lakes.

Behchokò is home to the Tłı̨chq̨ Government (TG), established with the settlement of the Tłı̨chq̨ Land Claim and Self-Government Agreement. The municipality is officially known as the Tłı̨chq̨ Community Government of Behchokò. Pursuant to

the Agreement, almost all land within the community is owned by the Tłı̨chq̨ Community Government, and leased to residents and other organizations, including Housing NWT. Located just an hour from Yellowknife along Highway 3, many residents do much of their shopping in the city, while some individuals commute to Behchokò from Yellowknife daily. As a larger community and regional hub, there is a significant public service workforce, numbering 335 people in 2025, not counting municipal and TG workers. This workforce is reflected in the community's divergent AMHI data, as Behchokò has the highest percentage of households earning more than 120% of the median household income of any regional centre, while also seeing an above-average rate of low-income households (earning between 21% and 50% of the median household income). Behchokò experiences periodic wildfires in the surrounding area, most notably in 2023 when a fire destroyed homes on the east side of Rae as well as many cabins along Highway 3.

## HOUSING IN BEHCHOKÒ

There are an estimated 494 households in Behchokò, resulting in an average household size of 4.1 people per home. This is considerably higher than the territorial average, and for context, can be compared to Fort Simpson, another regional centre. Despite a population of nearly 700 people less, Fort Simpson has a similar number of households. This reinforces the lack of housing in Behchokò. The community has a fairly even split between homeowner (56.7%) and renter (43.3%) households.

*Dzq̨ gots'q̨ ı̀dàà gots'q̨  
goxè hq̨zı̀ hòɁq̨ gha*

Housing NWT maintains a large inventory in the community, with 169 public housing units, all of which are located in Rae. In 2025, 21.2% of the community's population lives in public housing, with 43% of all public housing residents being youth 18 years or under, a rate well above the territorial average. The median year of construction of public housing units is 1991, with 7 new units built in Behchokò since 2020. The average UCR for public housing units is 68, though that includes vacant units in need of repair and homes beyond economic repair. In terms of the type of home, there are a significant number of detached public housing homes (56), with the remainder being in multi-unit buildings of various sizes up to a six-plex. Most of the units in these multi-unit buildings are 1- or 2-bedroom homes, while many of the detached homes have 3 or 4 bedrooms. The Behchokò Kò Gha K'àodèe manages the community's public housing on Housing NWT's behalf.

Housing NWT also maintains 22 market rental units, with 11 each in Rae and Edzo, as well as 15 homes dedicated to a previous homeownership support program, with all but 2 located in Rae. Behchokò also has a small transitional housing complex funded by Housing NWT and operated by the Tłjchq Łeàgłq Ts'ıllı Kq (Tłjchq Friendship Centre), while the Tłjchq Government operates a warming shelter. In recent years, the Tłjchq Government has also been building a number of new modular homes, in particular to support Tłjchq Community Services Agency (TCSA) workers to be able to live in the community. At a larger scale, the Community Government of Behchokò is also working with the Tłjchq Government to develop a new subdivision that would cover approximately 80 hectares, allowing for 174 lots and 608 dwelling units once fully developed.

Behchokò has a high rate of Elder (aged 65 and older) household maintainers, at 28.7%, meaning about 142 households in total are maintained by Elders. Territory-wide, this rate is 22.7%. As the percentage of the population aged 60 and older in public housing is relatively low (10.5%), it is likely that many of these Elders are homeowners. This presents particular challenges around home maintenance, accessibility, and costs given many Elders are on a fixed income. In 2021, about 30% of owner households in Behchokò had a mortgage, which was roughly half the territorial average. The median home value was \$200,000.

## HOUSING NEEDS

While we were unfortunately unable to meet with community leadership in Behchokò as part of this project, statistical data and other sources including survey responses offer insight into the extreme housing needs of the community. For example, at the end of November 2025, there were 159 households on the public housing waitlist for the community, with 136 applicants seeking a 1-bedroom home, 19 seeking a 2-bedroom home, and 4 seeking a 3-bedroom home. It is likely that some of these applicants are only on the waitlist purely due to income assistance

requirements, however the majority are likely in actual housing need. Behchokò represents 18% of all households on the public housing waitlist in the territory, while representing just 4.4% of the territorial population.

Beyond non-market housing, there is also a significant need for market rentals in the community, a need which TG has made significant recent investments to help address in recent years, with the addition of several market rental units. In November 2025, there were 24 households on Housing NWT's market housing waitlist for Behchokò, the lengthiest Housing NWT market housing waitlist in the territory. These households were seeking a mix of 1- and 2-bedroom homes, with one applicant seeking a 3-bedroom home. GNWT departments also identified a need for at least 2 additional market rentals in the community in order to meet staff housing needs.

In 2024, well over half of all households in Behchokò had a housing problem, 281 households in total. A need for major repairs was the most common problem, affecting 36% of all households, while 9% of households were unaffordable and 26% were unsuitable. The rate of CHN across all households was 31.1%, the second-highest rate of CHN among communities with a population over 1,000 after Tuktoyaktuk. The rate of unsuitable housing in Behchokò is nearly 3 times the territorial average and is reflected in the extensive waitlists for housing. This points to a need for a significant amount of new housing, likely of smaller sizes to offer independent living options for young adults and small families who may be currently sharing spaces with older adults or other family members.

Community members need affordability supports, particularly low- and moderate-income households. Despite being just one hour away from Yellowknife, Behchokò's community price index in 2019 was 144 (compared to Yellowknife's baseline of 100), indicating significantly higher costs of goods, particularly for residents who cannot easily do their shopping in Yellowknife. Further, Behchokò has the lowest median household income of any regional centre, meaning many households have less disposable income to begin with.

Finally, inadequate housing must be mentioned. With 178 households living in homes in need of major repairs, Behchokò again has the highest rate of inadequate housing of any NWT community with a population over 1,000 people. There are numerous local news stories highlighting the challenging housing conditions residents experience, with older homes—often inhabited by Elders—at particular risk of poor conditions. Shifting foundations and resulting cracks and damage to windows and doors are reported to be common, as are frozen pipes in wintertime. Both TG and Housing NWT offer repair programs that aim to address such repair needs, but individuals can have difficulty accessing such programs, and a significant amount of need remains.