The Ak-Chin Indian Community consists of both Tohono O’odham and Pima Indians in the Sonoran Desert of south-central Arizona. The O’odham translation of Ak-Chin means “mouth of the wash” or “place where the wash loses itself in the sand or ground.” According to the Ak-Chin, this term refers to a type of farming that relies on washes or seasonal floodplains for irrigation.

The Ak-Chin Indian Community was established in May 1912 through an Executive Order from President Taft. The originally-established 47,600-acre reservation was reduced to less than 22,000 acres in 1913. In 1961 the tribe’s government was formally organized, and the Ak-Chin are currently governed by a five-member tribal council.

According to the 2010 decennial census, approximately 1,000 individuals live on Ak-Chin Indian Community Tribal Land in Arizona.

LOCATION

The Ak-Chin Indian Community is located in the Santa Cruz Valley 58 miles south of Phoenix, Arizona. All of the land within the Ak-Chin Community is held in trust by the United States government. The land area consists of 32.78 square miles, with 16,000 of 21,840 acres dedicated to agriculture/farming. This makes the Ak-Chin community one of the largest farming communities in the United States.

*Information as of June, 2015, http://ak-chin.nsn.us
SOCIAL & HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS*

The Ak-Chin Indian Community is a young community. The under-18 population accounts for 43.4 percent of all tribal members, which is considerably higher than the State of Arizona as a whole and Pinal County. The median age for the tribe is 23.2, compared to a median age of 35.9 for the State.

There are approximately 299 housing units on the Ak-Chin reservation. The majority are renter-occupied due to the land being held in trust.

The Ak-Chin Indian Community is made up of diverse households. Households are twice as likely to be multigenerational (11.7 percent) than the State (4.9 percent), defined by the Census as more than two generations living together. Less than half of households are traditional married-couple families (41.5 percent), and households headed by a single female make up more than one-fourth (28.4 percent) of all households.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

Ak-Chin households have a significantly high poverty rate (47 percent), with 42 percent classified as “severely poor” due to earning less than half of the poverty threshold. The percent in poverty is especially high for youth—64 percent of those under age 18 live in poverty. The median household income for the Ak-Chin Indian Community is $32,022.

In terms of occupation, the majority of workers (more than 80 percent) work for the government.

ENTERPRISES

• Harrah’s Ak-Chin Casino and Resort opened in 1994 and employs more than 830 people.

• Ak-Chin Farms maintains cotton, barley, potatoes, alfalfa, and corn crops on approximately 16,000 acres. Of total tribal income, $9.7 million comes from the Ak-Chin Farms.

• Southern Dunes Golf Club is a top-rated golf course on more than 320 acres.

• In 2002 Hickman’s Farms built an egg ranch at the Ak-Chin Industrial Park, a facility that holds 230,000 chickens for egg production.

• The Ak-Chin Indian Community runs the Ak-Chin Him Dak Eco-Museum, the first of its kind in America. The museum was established to preserve, protect, promote, and teach all aspects of Ak-Chin heritage. The museum hosts two yearly celebrations, the annual Him-Dak Celebration in April, and Native American Recognition Day in September.

• Ak-Chin Pavilion is an amphitheater where bands and musicians perform live; the Ak-Chin Indian Community currently sponsors the venue and holds the naming rights.

*All statistics on this page are from the 2010 Decennial Census or the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.
Articles of the Ak-Chin Indian Community Constitution that may pertain to institutional research protocol:

Article VIII - Powers of the Community Council

Section 1 (a), the Council’s power includes representing the Community in negotiating with “federal, state, and local governments, and other corporations, associations, partnerships, or individuals and to cooperate with the Bureau of Indian Affairs, Department of Public Health, and various department and agencies of the State of Arizona in matters of welfare, education, recreation, and social services.”

- The University of Arizona, as an institution of the State of Arizona is required to negotiate with the Ak-Chin Community Council on issues that impact the welfare of the Community, including institutional research.

Section 1 (c) “To promote and protect the health, peace, morals, education, and general welfare of the Community and its members.”

- The Community Council is charged to protect the Community.

Section 1 (k) “To provide by ordinance regulations for removal or exclusion from the Reservation non-members whose presence may be injurious to the peace, health, or welfare of the community.”

- The Community Council serves to protect the community from injury; therefore, they may remove any non-members, including researchers.

Section 1 (l) “To determine its own rules of procedures.”

- The Community Council may determine and make its own rules as it relates to research protocols.

Federal

42 USC § 3515b requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to adopt appropriate regulations for the use of federal funds to pay for any research program or project, or any program, project, or course which is of an experimental nature, or any other activity involving human participants that presents a danger to the physical, mental, or emotional well-being of a participant or subject.

45 C.F.R. § 46.101 requires that research that is supported by a federal department or agency (defined by 45 C.F.R. § 46.102(e)) must be reviewed and approved by an institutional review board.