The Tohono O’odham Nation, “People of the Desert,” have lived in the region for more than 10,000 years. The federally-recognized sovereign nation was greatly affected by the legacy of the 1853 Gadsden Purchase, which split their lands between the United States and Mexico. Twentieth-century federal policies of forced relocation moved numerous Tohono O’odham families outside of Arizona, yet many continue to live in the Sonoran desert on their ancestral lands.

According to the 2010 decennial census, approximately 10,201 individuals live on Tohono O’odham Nation Tribal Land in Arizona.

Address: PO Box 837, Sells, AZ 85634
Phone: 520-383-2028
Website: http://www.tonation-nsn.gov

The Nation is comprised of four distinct segments. The largest of these (the Tohono O’odham Reservation) is located 63 miles west of Tucson, Arizona, and is more than 2.8 million acres. San Xavier, the second largest land base, is 71,095 acres. Smaller areas are the San Lucy District (near Gila Bend, AZ) and Florence Village (near Florence, AZ). The Tohono O’odham Nation is organized into 12 districts with Sells, Arizona, functioning as the Nation’s capital.

SOCIAL CHARACTERISTICS*
Prior to the 1980s, the Tohono O’odham were known as the Papago Tribe. Many Tohono O’odham families continue to speak Tohono O’odham, in spite of the language use decreasing over time. According to the U.S. Census, 44.4 percent of the Tohono O’odham speak a language other than English. More than one-third of households (36.8 percent) have children under the age of 18. Of those over age 25, 69.1 percent have a high school diploma or less.

HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS
There are approximately 3,844 housing units on the Tohono O’odham Nation. The majority (71.1 percent) are owner-occupied, single-family detached homes (72.5 percent).

The median home value on tribal lands is $61,700. Currently, 26 percent of homeowners are paying 30 percent or more of their household income on housing, and 23.2 percent of renters are paying 30 percent or more of their income on rent.

ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS
Tohono O’odham Nation families have a significantly high poverty rate (37.7 percent) and an unemployment rate of 24.6 percent, compared to the 9.7 percent unemployment rate for the United States as a whole. Female-headed households with children are highly likely to live in poverty (53.1 percent of households with children under 18, and 89.6 percent of households with children under age 5). The median household income for the Tohono O’odham is $27,468. As of 2013, 32.7 percent of Tohono O’odham families did not have health insurance coverage.

In terms of occupation, one third of the Tohono O’odham work in service occupations, with the majority (more than 60 percent) working for the government.

TOHONO O’ODHAM COMMUNITY COLLEGE
Tohono O’odham Community College (TOCC) is a two-year accredited college located in Sells, Arizona. TOCC opened its doors in 2000 and primarily serves the residents of the Tohono O’odham Nation, but is open to anyone seeking higher education. TOCC offers numerous degrees, certificates, and other credentials. Courses are designed to complement classes at both Pima Community College and the University of Arizona. TOCC strives to provide quality education while preserving Tohono O’odham culture and traditions.

ENTREPRISES
Principal economic activities include tourism - most notably the Mission San Xavier del Bac - and three casinos (Desert Diamond on Nogales Highway, Desert Diamond on Pima Mine Road, and Golden Ha’san Casino in Why, AZ). The casinos employ more than 1,200 Native American and non-Native American people. The Nation also operates other facilities, such as the Tohono O’odham Utility Authority (TOUA), Tohono O’odham Economic Development Authority (TOEDA), and the Tohono O’odham Gaming Enterprise (TOGE).

TOHONO O’ODHAM RESEARCH CODE
The Tohono O’odham Nation Research Code was enacted and codified at 17 Tohono O’odham Code Chapter 8, by Resolution No. 13-165, effective May 23, 2013. To review the Tohono O’odham Nation’s Research Code, see http://www.nptao.arizona.edu/protocols.html.

*All statistics on this page are from the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, 5-Year Estimates.