Key Terms for Faith Engagement

The Partnership Center
Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives
U.S. Dept. of Health and Human Services

Clergy Refers only to ordained, often Christian leaders. Not all religions have clergy (e.g. Sikhs, Muslims).	**Religious Leaders** Term which includes leaders of any religious tradition whether ordained or not.
Church The building where most Christian denominations worship.	**House of Worship** The building (church, gurdwara, mosque, synagogue, temple, etc.) where adherents of a given religion worship.
House of Worship The building.	**Congregation** The people.
FBO, NGO, CBO Terms rarely used by faith communities when referring to themselves (avoid).	**Faith-based Social Services** Programs run by faith-based orgs (e.g. soup kitchen, shelter, job program).
Faith Community/Religious Sector Amalgamation of many groups with varying beliefs (avoid).	**Faith Communities** Acknowledges existence of many groups with varying beliefs.

Term	Definition
Ecumenical	Refers to multiple Christian denominations.
Inter-religious	Describes multiple faith communities meeting/gathering together but not combining religious doctrine/liturgy/belief.
Interfaith	Describes multiple faith communities doing something religious together (e.g. a prayer or worship service).
Multi-faith	Groups doing something together within their own belief system.