



Brief History of the American Resource Center

The first American library in Finland, operated by the United States Information Service, was opened at Kalevankatu 13 in Helsinki in 1946 with a modest collection of 2,000 books. In the course of time its collections grew and its services became a valuable source to the Finnish public.

From 1955 to 1995 the America Center Library was located at Kaivokatu opposite the Helsinki railway station offering an easy access to topical US information, American books, magazines and in the early years also to music recordings and films. Cultural events, film shows, and art exhibitions were arranged at USIS premises. The America Center Library was a popular spot downtown, especially among students and media professionals.

In 1993 a unique partnership was formed integrating the American Resource Center (ARC) into the Helsinki University Library logistical system, while the US Department of State provides funding for ARC collections and staff. Between 1998 and 2012 ARC was located in the neoclassical library building "Fabiania" at the National Library of Finland in the center of Helsinki.

When the new Helsinki University Main Library at the Kaisa House was opened in 2012, the ARC found a new home in the middle of the university hub. As the biggest university library in Finland, the Helsinki University Library serves the academic community as a modern learning and research centre and offers a meeting place for all residents. The Helsinki University Main Library was the most ambitious project of the World Design Capital Helsinki 2012.

The American Resource Center seeks to further the understanding of America and its institutions. It specializes in providing the latest and most accurate information about the U.S. government and its policies, American values, history, culture, and character.

The collection is strong in social sciences, government and politics, economics and international relations, and American history and literature. The holdings comprise more than 10,000 volumes, subscriptions to 75 periodicals, and 2 American newspapers.

The ARC collection may be accessed through the HELKA-online catalog. Lending services are available according to the regulations of the Helsinki University Library.