

The Allegany Public Library system has a wealth of free information about colleges and careers. Have you been there recently? Did you know that you do not need to go there physically? When you can't get out, or when the library is closed, you can still check out books—e-books. It is simple to download the free Adobe Digital Editions reader and find an interesting book to borrow. All you need is your library card number and internet access: <http://www.youseemore.com/Allegany/default.asp>. Even if you don't have a physical library card, as a student at an Allegany County school, you have a virtual library card, called the STAR card.

There are many online databases at the library site. Using these sources will please Mr. Hays, Mrs. McCauley, and other teachers who assign research papers. Unlike some information gained from general websites, the information found here is authoritative. I will mention two categories of the many databases that you may choose from: live online help and college and career resources.

1. Live online help: At Ask Us Now, a 24/7 interactive service, trained librarians use internet chat to answer your questions and guide you to other sources for further research. Students in grades 4-12 can use Tutor.com seven days a week between the hours of 2 p.m. and 12:00 a.m. to receive help in math, science, social studies, and English. You can pay for this service by going to their website, or you can get it free as often as you like by accessing it through the public library website link.

2. College and career resources: The Career Information Center provides over 700 job profiles—description, salary, and outlook information, for example. The College Blue Book is a guide to 2- and 4-year schools, with detailed descriptions of programs, degrees offered, and scholarships. ` Learn-A-Test provides interactive practice tests and tutorials for tests like the PSAT, SAT, ACT, and many others. You get explanations of the answers and individual analysis of your results.

There are many other databases at the library site—genealogy, history, general reference, learning games, and too many others to mention. While you're there looking for college and career resource, check out a few others.