

A person wearing a mustard-colored sweater is sitting at a wooden desk, using a laptop. Their hands are visible on the laptop's trackpad and keyboard. The background is slightly blurred, showing a dark surface.

TRAVEL SOUTH DAKOTA

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY + UX WORKSHOP

JANUARY 2026

miles
PARTNERSHIP

With You Today:



August Erickson | CPACC
*Director of Development Services
at Miles Partnership*



Today

1. Digital Accessibility Refresher
2. Group Exercise
3. How to Get Started
4. Live Demo
5. Travel South Dakota's Efforts
6. Audience Q&A





What is Digital Accessibility?

The process of ensuring digital products (primarily websites) are accessible to those with disabilities.

At a very high-level this entails continuous analysis of digital products, to remove any digital barriers detected.



Important Acronyms:

ally » (Digital) Accessibility

UX » User Experience

ADA » Americans with Disabilities Act

WCAG » Web Content Accessibility Guidelines



What Are the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?

- Internationally recognized **guidelines**, published and maintained by W3C.
- WCAG outlines specific success criteria which are designed to remove digital barriers for individuals with disabilities, and ensure digital content can be analyzed by **assistive technologies**.
- In short, they're the '**Gold Standard**' of digital accessibility.



What Are Assistive Technologies?

- Any technology used by individuals with disabilities in order to perform functions that might otherwise be difficult or impossible.
- Some examples include:
 - Screen readers
 - Screen magnifiers
 - Speech input devices



Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Versions

- The current version of WCAG is **2.2** – which was finalized by W3C on October 5th 2023.
- Each version of WCAG is built “on top” or previous versions.
- As an example, WCAG **2.2** introduced 9 NEW success criteria, which were not outlined in WCAG **2.1**



Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)

Conformance Levels

- **Level A** is the minimum level of conformance.
- **Level AA** includes all Level A and AA success criteria and is the most widely used conformance level.
- **Level AAA** is the highest possible level and includes all Level A, AA, and AAA success criteria.
 - It is **not** recommended that Level AAA conformance be required as a general policy, as it is not possible to satisfy all Level AAA success criteria for some content.



§ Success Criterion 1.4.3 Contrast (Minimum)

(Level AA)

The visual presentation of [text](#) and [images of text](#) has a [contrast ratio](#) of at least 4.5:1, except for the following:

[Understanding Contrast \(Minimum\)](#)

[How to Meet Contrast \(Minimum\)](#)

Large Text

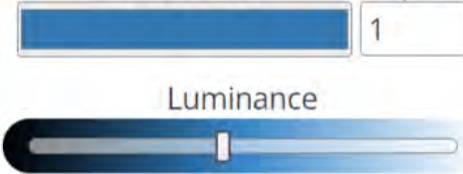
[Large-scale](#) text and images of large-scale text have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1;

Foreground

Hex Value
3479B2

Color Picker Alpha
1

Luminance

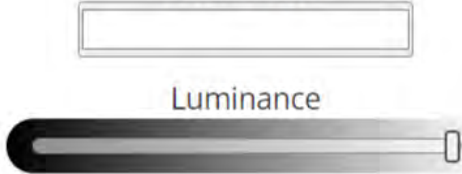


Background

Hex Value
FFFFFFFF

Color Picker

Luminance



Contrast Ratio
4.64:1



Ratio of 1.17:1

This is a Test



Ratio of 1.43:1

This is a Test



Ratio of 2.64:1

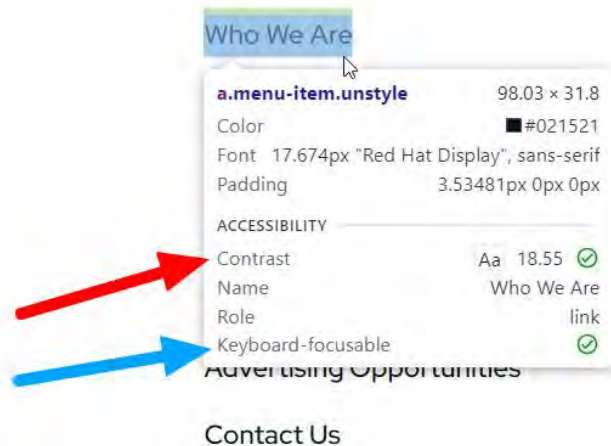
This is a Test



Ratio of 8.9:1

This is a Test





Stay in Touch

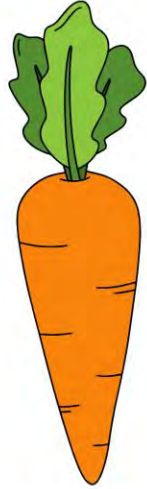
Sign up to receive emails on the latest topics and trends in destination marketing and the tourism industry.

Your email here

We promise to be considerate with your inbox. We'll never share or resell your information, and we'll always stick to the terms of our [privacy policy](#). You can unsubscribe anytime.



The Carrot & The Stick



Rewards / Benefits



Punishment / Ramifications





The Carrot

Digital accessibility **increases your potential customer / visitor base**

- 1 in 4 adults in the United States have some type of disability (*CDC 2025*)
- Travelers with disabilities take an average of 3.7 leisure trips per year (*State of the American Traveler 2025*)
- Travelers with disabilities are more likely to utilize online resources for trip planning than all other travelers (*State of the American Traveler 2025*)



The Carrot

Digital accessibility **has substantial SEO benefits**

- Example: Alternative (alt) text for images
 - Allows search engines to properly index images



» **Alt text:** Man laughs with friends while working on his laptop at a coffee shop.



Let's Talk About

The Curb-Cut Effect



The Curb-Cut Effect

By prioritizing digital accessibility, you're creating a better user experience for ALL





The Carrot

Example of the **curb-cut effect** in web development

- Prime example with websites is color contrast requirements.
 - Designed to benefit those who are color blind and/or have low vision
- Color contrast requirements also benefit:
 - Users with low quality monitors
 - Users relying on devices with smaller screen sizes
 - Older users with deteriorating eyesight





THE CARROT OF DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY FOCUSES ON THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MISSION



WCAG Personas

Personas allow us to view digital accessibility through a **'human' lens**

- W3C outlines 9 separate personas, tied to the WCAG success criteria.
- These personas highlight the effect of accessibility barriers and the broader benefits of accessible websites.





Break Into Groups

Instructions:

- Introduce yourself to your group
- Review your persona
- Try to conduct your task at hand
- Prepare to share





Break Into Groups

Let's Share:

- Read off your persona
- What was the task you were asked to do?
- Were you able to complete the task?
- How did you *feel* during this exercise?





The Stick

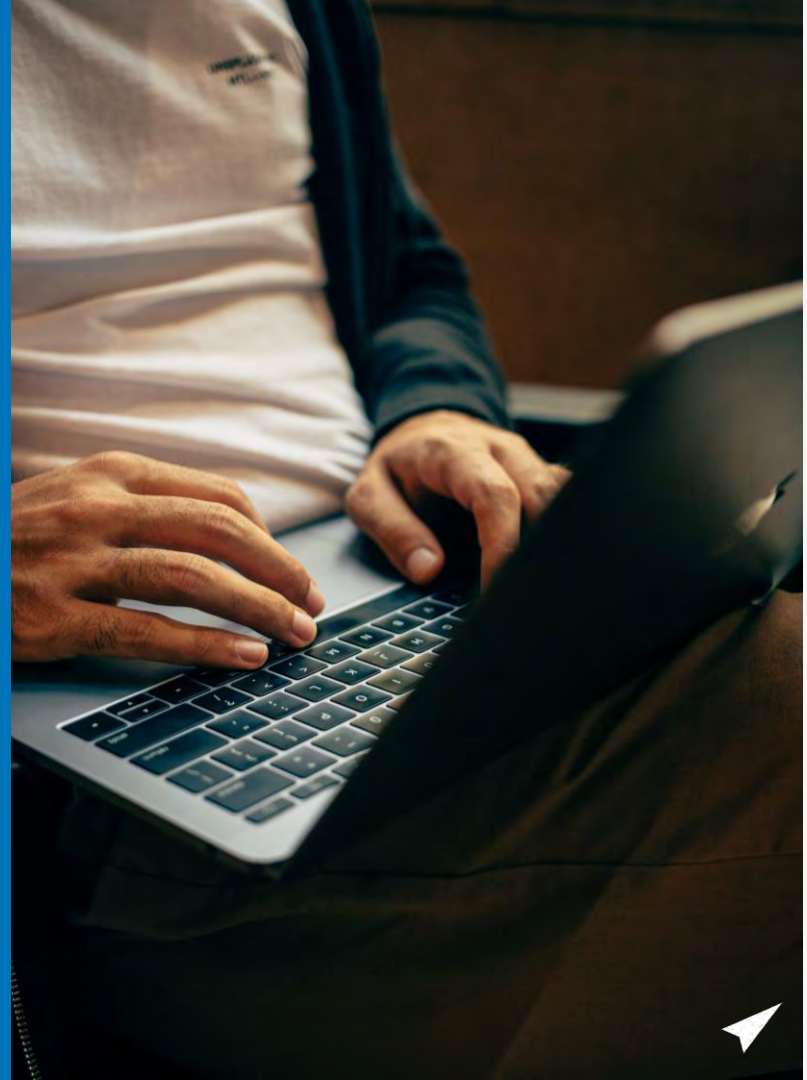
Digital accessibility is a **legal requirement** (under the ADA)

- Prioritizing digital accessibility reduces your legal risk.
- You reduce your legal risk by conforming to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)



The Legal History of Digital Accessibility:

- » **1990:** The ADA is signed into law by George H.W. Bush
- » **1991:** The first website goes live on the world wide web
- » **1994:** The World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) is founded
- » **1996:** The DOJ takes the “position” that the ADA applies to web content – without providing guidelines of what makes a website accessible



The Legal History of Digital Accessibility:

- » **1999:** The Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG 1.0) is introduced by W3C
- » **2008:** WCAG 2.0 is introduced by W3C
- » **2017:** Lawsuits against websites begin to rise (Winn-Dixie lawsuit)
- » **2018:** WCAG 2.1 is introduced by W3C
- » **2023:** WCAG 2.2 is introduced by W3C



The Legal Landscape of Digital Accessibility

- WCAG are guidelines, **not formal law**. However, WCAG is cited on the ADA website.
- WCAG is referenced in both existing federal and state legislation.
 - Section 508 (federal) references WCAG 2.0 AA
 - California and Colorado's state legislation references WCAG 2.1 AA





THE STICK OF DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY FOCUSES ON LEGAL & FINANCIAL REPERCUSSIONS

Digital Accessibility Lawsuits in 2025 (United States)

- **97%** of the digital accessibility lawsuits filed were against desktop websites.
 - Mobile websites only accounted for **3%**
- **Over 40%** of the lawsuits filed at the federal level were against businesses / organizations with previous lawsuits.
- **25%** of the lawsuits filed were against websites using an accessibility widget
 - Many of these lawsuits reference the widgets themselves as the barrier.





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Accessibility Menu (CTRL+U)

[US](#) English (USA) ▶

[Accessibility Profiles](#) ▶

[XL](#) Oversized Widget



Screen Reader



Contrast +



Smart Contrast



Highlight Links



Bigger Text



Text Spacing



Pause Animations



Hide Images

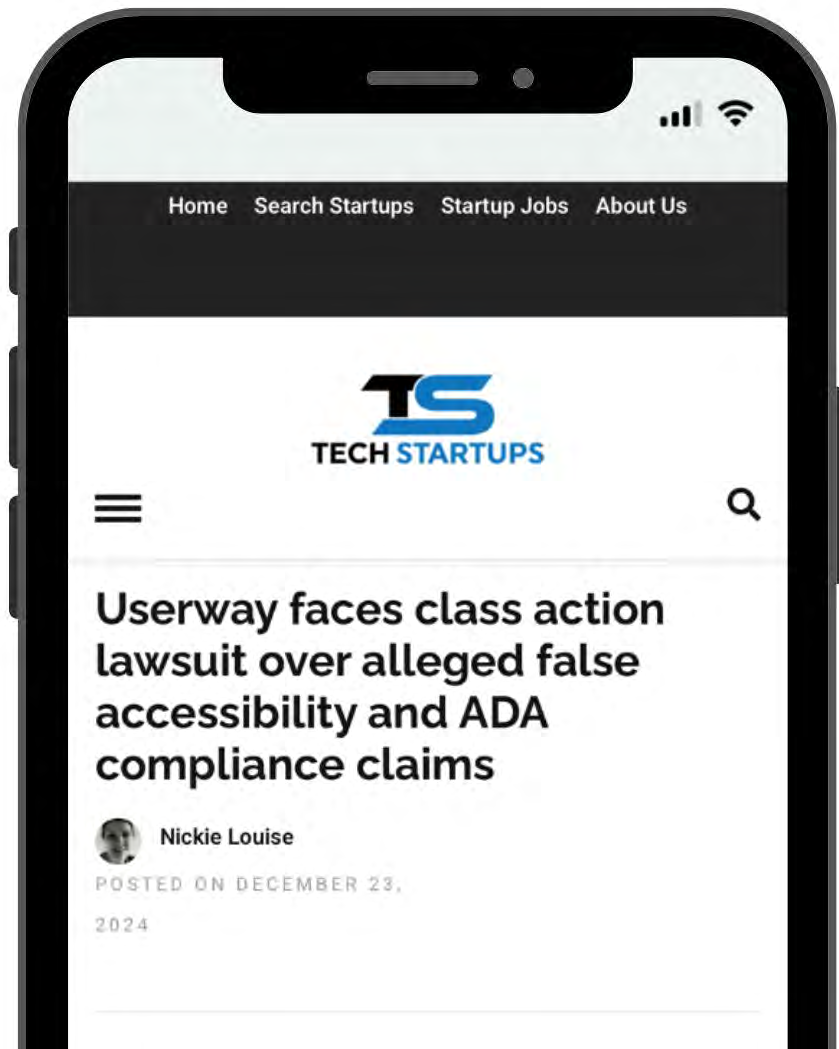
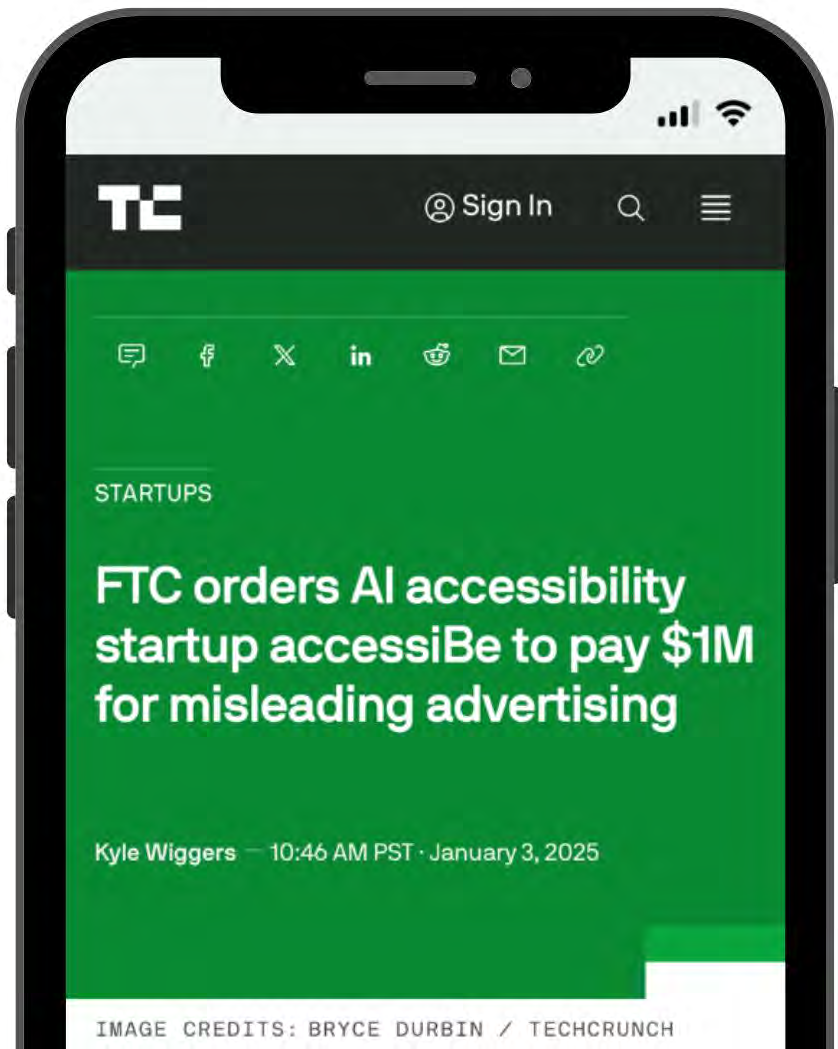


Df

Dyslexia Friendly

[Report a Problem](#)

[Manage](#)



How to

Remediate Content

Work with your web provider, internal digital team, and/or a 3rd party provider:

- Analyze your website to detect accessibility issues (WCAG 2.2 AA violations).
- Then conduct prioritized remediations to resolve these issues.



How to Analyze Your Website

Through a combination of automated scans and manual user testing

- **PHASE #1:** Automated scans look for code / structure-based issues based on the WCAG 2.2 AA success criteria.
- **PHASE #2:** Manual user testing consists of testing your website relying on keyboard navigation and/or assistive technologies.



How to Analyze
**Your
Website**

Potential providers for automated
scans:

deque

UsableNet



Siteimprove



Save \$500 on passes for the Food & Wine Festival



NEWS

American Airlines Is Cutting These 5 U.S. Routes From Austin Airport

By Michael Cappetta



NEWS

United Just Made a Big Change to Its Basic Economy Tickets

By Alison Fox

Siteimprove Accessibility Checker

Issues Explorer

Issues overview

1.1.1 Non-text Content

Image missing a text alternative

All non-decorative images must have a text alternative (also known as "alt text").

Why is this an issue

Occurrences of this issue 1

<https://www.travelandleis...948ca9b24802594131974.jpg>

→ Add a text alternative for the image.

Image



ted This Idyllic nfront Mexican to Learn What ad's 'Year of the 't' Was All About

Kachroo-Levine



Siteimprove Live Demo

How to Analyze
**Your
Website**



Siteimprove



How to Prioritize

Ally Efforts

**When conducting remediations,
ensure you're following a prioritized
approach**

- **Priority #1:** Global Elements
- **Priority #2:** Homepage
- **Priority #3:** Template Based
- **Priority #4:** Individual Remediations



Goal is to address accessibility issues as early as possible

- The time and cost to remediate accessibility issues **drastically increases** over time



Embody A

Shift-Left Approach



Let's Review

Actionable First Steps



Actionable

First Steps

Create and publish an accessibility statement on your website

- Conveys your organization's **commitment to digital accessibility**
- **Provides contact information** in case users encounter a digital barrier
- Use the W3C **statement generator**
- To be linked in the **footer of your website**





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[Why We're Here](#)

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| [Tourism Exchange USA](#)

| [Coraggio Group](#)

| [Black Diamond](#)

| [Wayfinder](#)



Actionable

First Steps

Add captions to video-based content used on your website

- YouTube and Vimeo support **automatic captioning** (powered by AI)
- Edit the automatic captions provided to ensure there's **proper punctuation**



Digital Accessibility should be viewed as a process, not a project

- Digital accessibility is an ongoing initiative
 - Modern websites are incredibly dynamic
 - Accessibility guidelines change over time
- It's best to address new accessibility issues as they arise, to **continue** to facilitate the best user experience possible for those with disabilities.



When it comes to digital accessibility, never speak in absolutes



“Fully ADA Compliant”



“Meets WCAG 2.2 AA Conformance”



“In an effort to progress toward satisfying WCAG 2.2 AA conformance”



Travel South Dakota's

Digital Accessibility Efforts

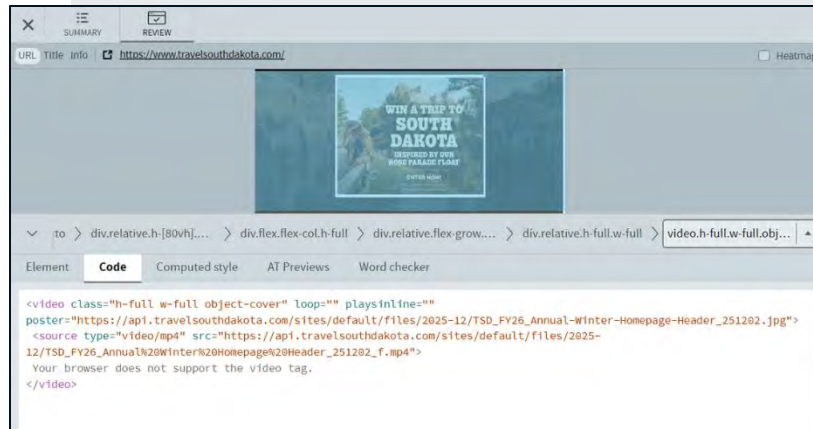
South Dakota's Efforts

Holistic Approach: Content + Website Optimization

SOUTH DAKOTA ACCESSIBILITY RESOURCES

South Dakota invites visitors of all abilities to experience our state's natural wonders, awe-inspiring beauty and wide-open spaces.

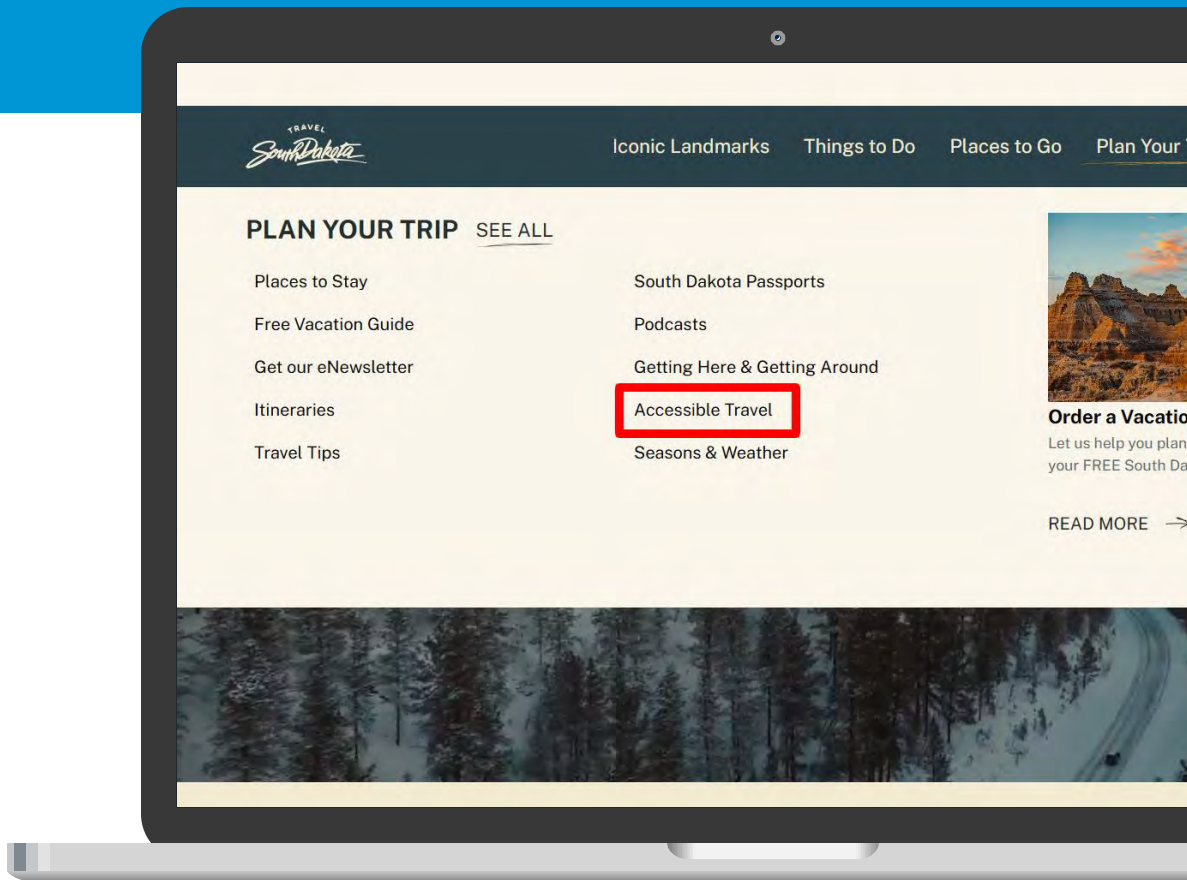
Whether you're planning to visit landmark attractions like [Mount Rushmore National Memorial](#) and [Badlands National Park](#) or take part in South Dakota's renowned [hunting](#) and [fishing](#), we hope this page can help you build your ideal vacation itinerary in the 605 state.



Custom Content

Custom content for travelers with disabilities.

- Blog posts
- Itineraries
- Planning resources



Let's Connect!



August Erickson | CPACC

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partnership.com



A large, light blue arrow pointing from the left towards the right, with its tip pointing towards the top right corner of the slide.

Q&A