



EXPLORE MINNESOTA TOURISM CONFERENCE

DIGITAL ACCESSIBILITY 101

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miles
PARTNERSHIP

With You Today:



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Today

1. What is Digital Accessibility?
2. The Carrot & The Stick
3. How to Get Started
4. Explore Minnesota's Efforts
5. Audience Q&A





INCLUSIVE EXPERIENCE

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 continuously analysis of digital products, to remove any digital barriers detected.



Important Acronyms:

a11y » Accessibility

ADA » Americans with Disabilities Act

WCAG » Web Content Accessibility Guidelines

W3C » World Wide Web Consortium



What Are the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG)?

- Internationally recognized **guidelines**, published and maintained by W3C, a non-profit organization formed to establish standards for the World Wide Web.
- 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



Screen reader test

Images with and without
alt attribute

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 requirements and is the most widely used conformance level.
- **Level AAA** is the highest possible level and includes all Level A, AA, and AAA requirements.
 - 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)

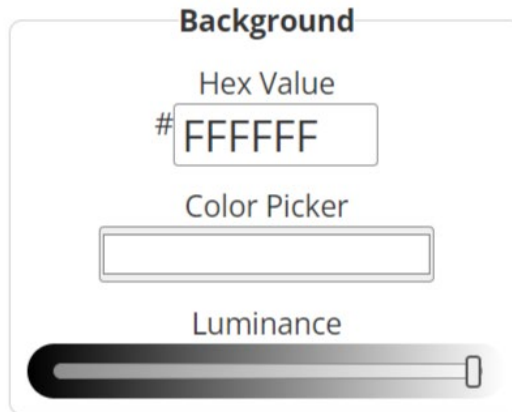
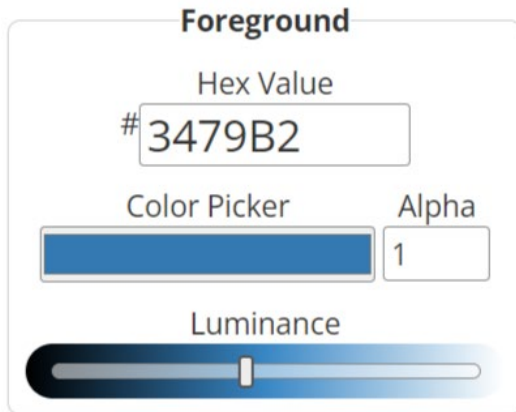
The visual presentation of [text](#) and [images of text](#) has a [contrast ratio](#) of at least 4.5:1, except for the following:

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

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

Large Text

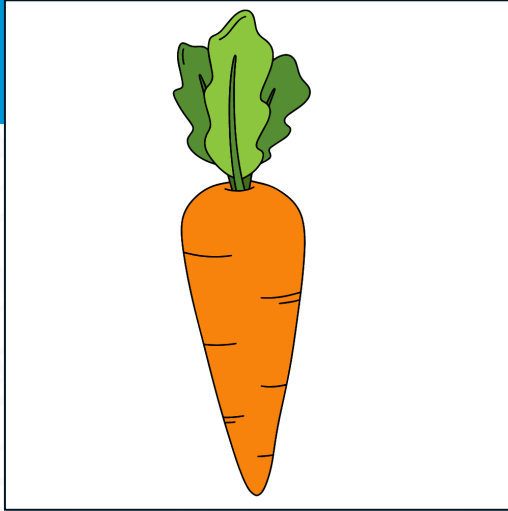
[Large-scale](#) text and images of large-scale text have a contrast ratio of at least 3:1;



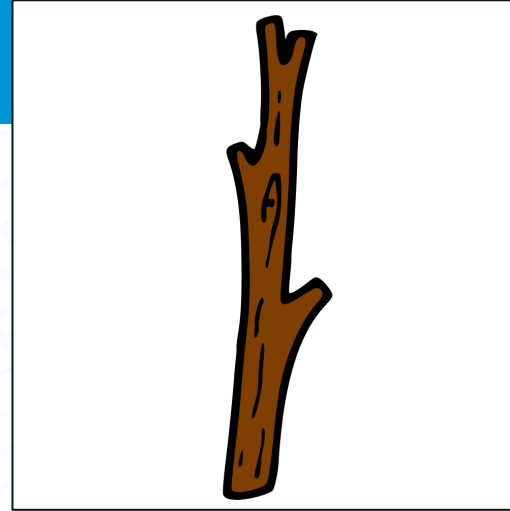
Contrast Ratio
4.64:1



The Carrot & The Stick



Rewards / Benefits



Punishment / Ramifications





The Carrot

Digital accessibility is the right thing to do

- It's altruistic – EVERYONE should be able to utilize the internet with minimal barriers
- It embodies inclusivity (DEI)
 - Diversity, Equity, and **Inclusion**



The Carrot

Digital accessibility increases your potential customer / visitor base

- 1 in 4 adults in the United States have some type of disability (*CDC 2023*)
- Travelers with disabilities take an average of 3.3 leisure trips per year (*State of the American Traveler 2023*)
- Travelers with disabilities are more likely to utilize online resources for trip planning than all other travelers (*State of the American Traveler 2023*)



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.



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





Alex, reporter with repetitive stress injury

Alex has worked as a reporter for more than 20 years and has developed a repetitive strain injury that makes it painful to use a mouse and to type for extended periods of time.

Though it took considerable research, time, and commitment to learn, he is able to work with less pain using the following modifications to his work environment:

- use of an ergonomic keyboard
- use of keyboard commands without a mouse
- voice recognition software on his computer and mobile phone
- assistive touch on his mobile phone

Alex encounters problems when websites and other online content cannot be navigated by keyboard commands alone. He frequently encounters web forms that do not have keyboard equivalents. Sometimes it is also difficult to skip content and navigate to sections on a webpage without using many keyboard commands, which is very tiring and limits the time he can spend working comfortably. He also recently began to explore the use of assistive touch on his mobile phone which also helps him use fewer gestures and work for longer periods of time. As a temporary fix, Alex's employer has built several custom work arounds that provide keyboard support for his use of the company's internal Content Management System with the intention to implement improved keyboard support to benefit all users on the next release of the software.

For more information on implementing techniques that remove barriers for Alex, see the following resources:

[+ Sections related to Alex](#)

A man with a beard and long hair, wearing a dark blue hoodie and dark pants, is sitting in a wheelchair. He has his arms outstretched to the sides. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Accessibility

The Greatest



The Stick

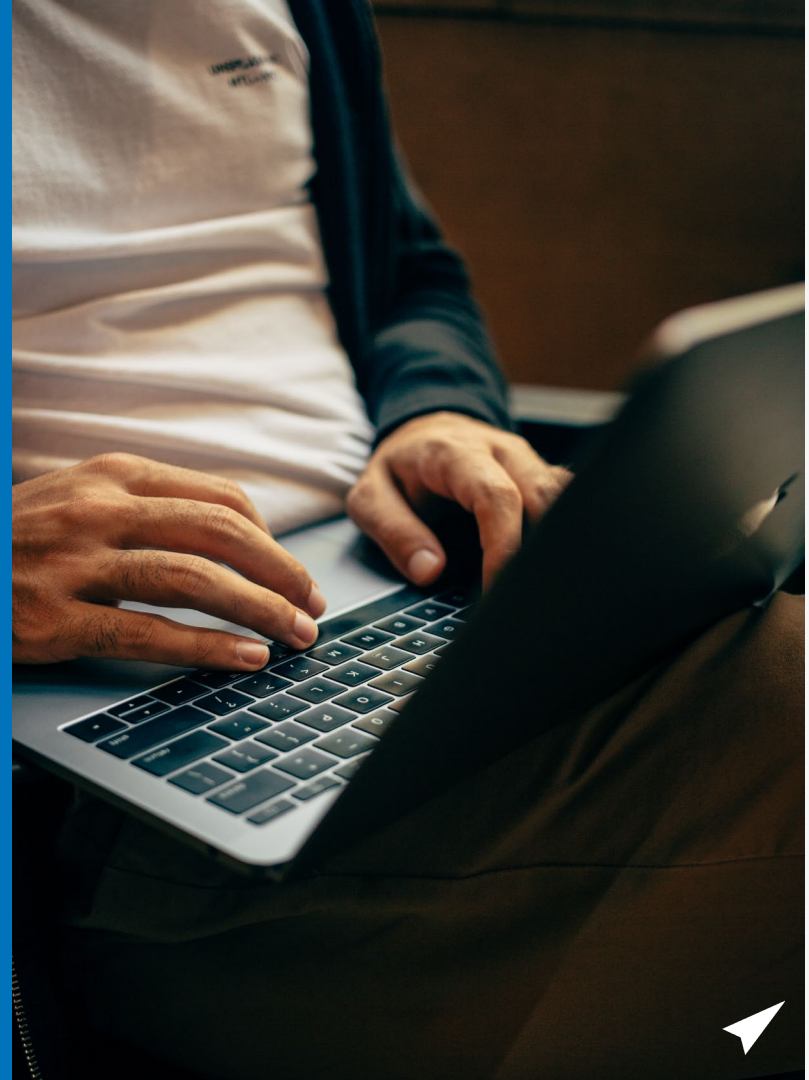
Digital accessibility is a **legal requirement** (under the ADA)

- Prioritizing digital accessibility reduces your legal risk.
- You reduce your legal risk by conforming to the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) - with the goal of preventing lawsuits and financial penalties.



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



Digital Accessibility Lawsuits in 2023 (United States)

- **97%** of the digital accessibility lawsuits filed were against desktop websites.
 - Mobile websites only accounted for **2%**
- **25%** of the lawsuits filed were against businesses / organizations with previous lawsuits.
- Over 20% of the lawsuits filed were against websites using an accessibility widget (substantial increase from 2022).
 - Many of these lawsuits reference the widgets themselves as the barrier.





About Us

FLAVORS & PROMOTIONS

Join the ICEE Family

DO



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 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 Prioritize

Ally Efforts

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

- **Phase #1:** Component based remediations
- **Phase #2:** Homepage remediations
- **Phase #3:** Template based remediations
- **Phase #4:** Individual remediations



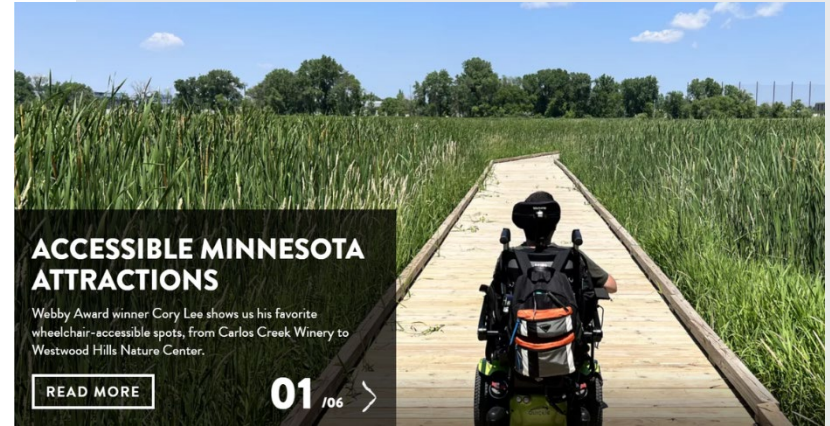
Digital Accessibility should be viewed as a process, not a project

- 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.



Explore Minnesota's Efforts

Holistic Approach: Content + Website Optimization



Page report Accessibility SEO Policy

Central Minnesota | Explore Minnesota
<https://www.exploreminnesota.com/central-minnesota> Set up a direct link to your CMS Open Page Inspector


[View page content](#) [View HTML](#)

Site target: **A AA AAA PG**

Resolved Issues 36

- Link missing a text alternative 24
- Some roles are invalid 2
- Button missing a text alternative 9
- Visible label and accessible name do not match 4
- Required ARIA attribute is missing 4
- Hidden element has focusable content 119
- ARIA attribute unsupported or prohibited 69
- Invalid state or property 164
- Image missing a text alternative 20
- ARIA attribute does not exist 164
- All initial view rendered 78

THE HEART OF MINNESOTA



Discover a land of pristine lakes and wooded hills, with miles of trails to explore by foot or bike in summer, or by snowshoe, snowmobile or fat bike in winter.

Central Minnesota is dotted with crystalline lakes, rivers and streams, perfect for fishing, boating, paddling and waterskiing. The region is also a notable golf destination, with over 70 scenic courses crafted by top designers. In the area's cities and towns, discover bustling main streets and abundant entertainment, shopping and dining. Plus, find museums and historic sites devoted to everything from aviator Charles Lindbergh and novelist Sinclair Lewis to Ojibwe Indian culture.

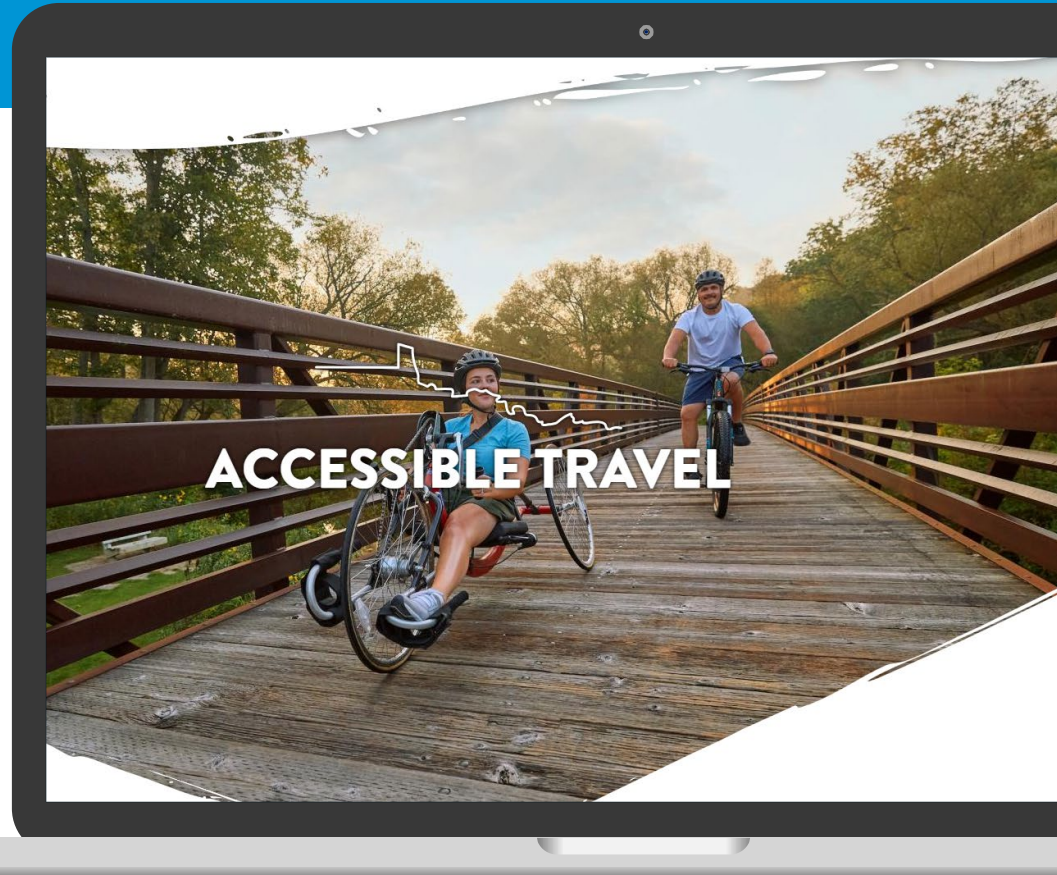
Here, you can fill up on fresh air and make priceless memories; don't be surprised if this magical place keeps calling you back.



Custom Content

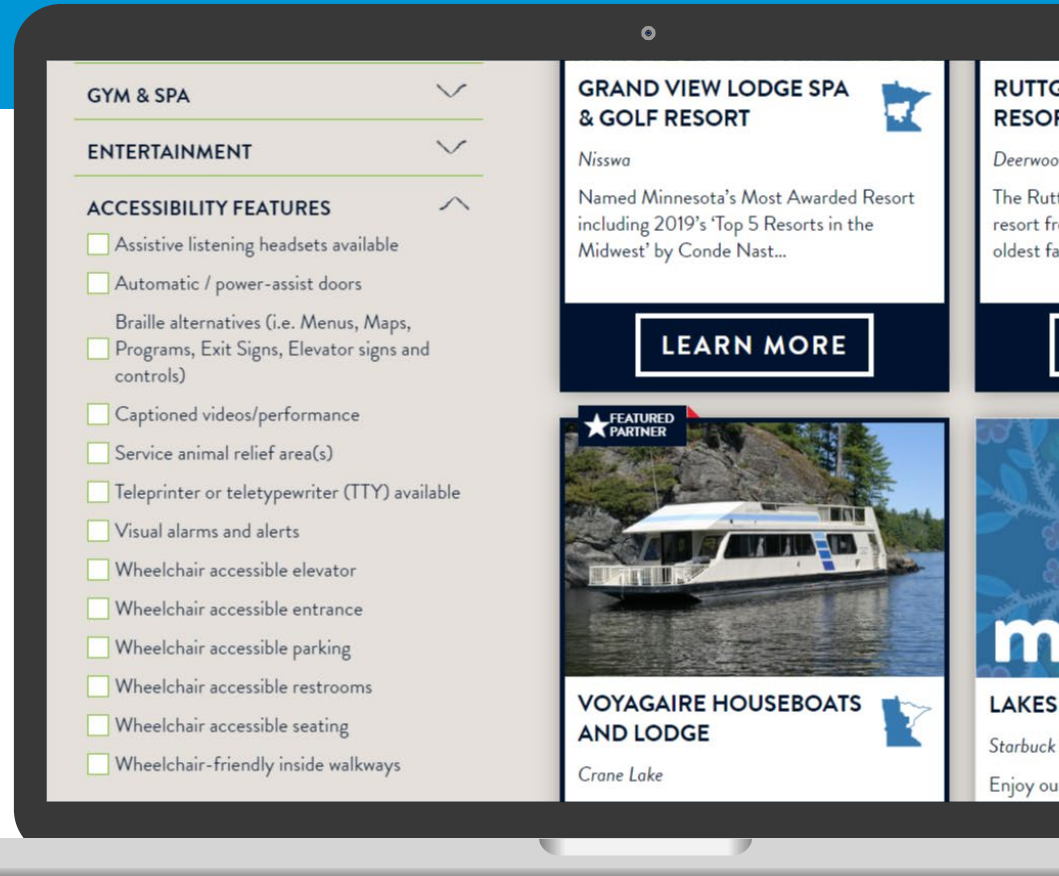
Custom content for travelers with disabilities.

- Blog posts
- Itineraries
- Planning resources



Search Interfaces

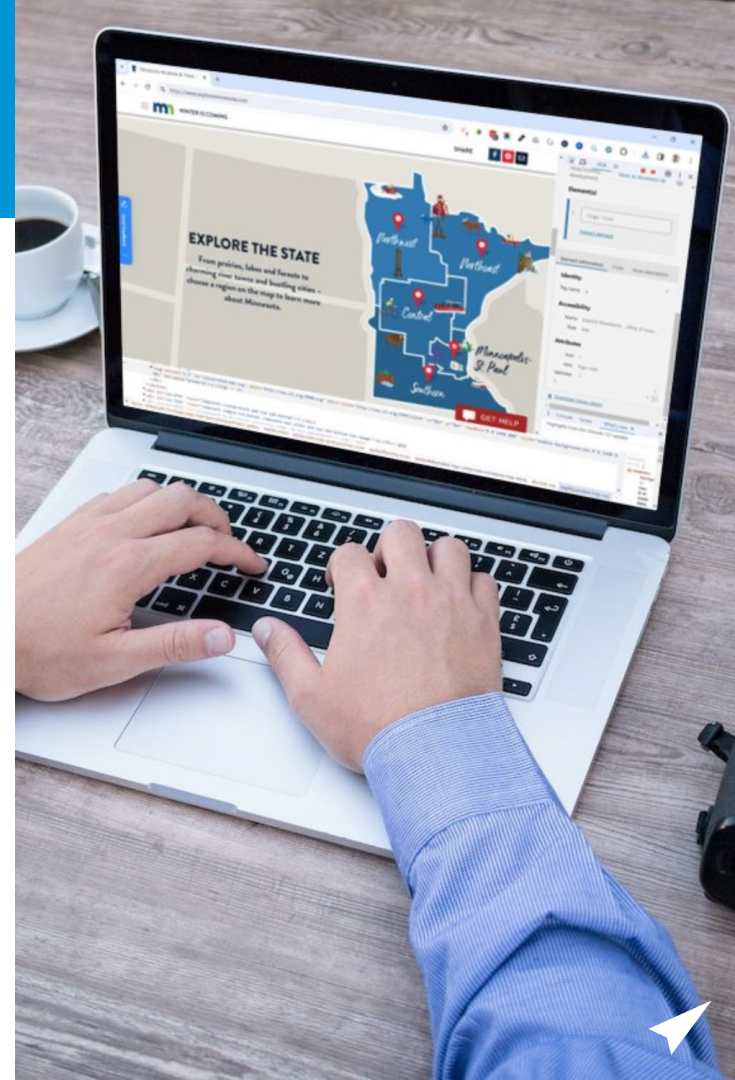
- Optimized search interfaces sitewide to include accessibility features / amenities.
- Allowing travelers to plan around their specific needs.



Explore Minnesota's Efforts

Commitment to a website that's accessible for ALL

- Continuous Analysis (WCAG 2.2 AA):
 - Sitemap based automated scans (20,000+ pages)
 - Rigorous manual user testing
- Followed by prioritized remediations as issues are detected





Q & A