

Rolling Toward a More Accessible Alabama





URB FREE

*With
Cory Lee*



What is SMA?

- A genetic neuromuscular disorder that affects motor neurons in the spinal cord causing progressive muscle degeneration and weakness.

THE WHEEL CHAIR SINGERS

The Famous York Family





















The
URBFREE
Foundation



What do I look for when I'm planning a trip?

The word “accessible” means something different to every person with a disability.

Accessible transportation



Accessible hotels





Accessible attractions (beach mats/beach wheelchairs, outdoor trails, museums, disability specific organizations)











A row of three metal wheelchairs is shown against a blue wall. The wheelchairs are arranged in a line, receding into the background. The lighting is soft, highlighting the metallic frames and black seats. The text "What can destinations do to attract wheelchair users?" is overlaid in white on the left side of the image.

What can destinations do to attract wheelchair users?

Sweet Home Alabama

OFFICIAL VACATION GUIDE

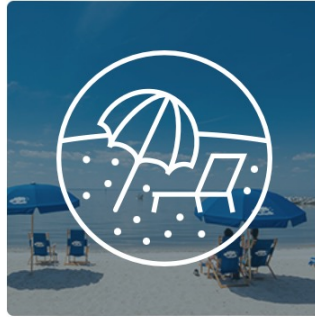


MONTGOMERY WHITEWATER PARK

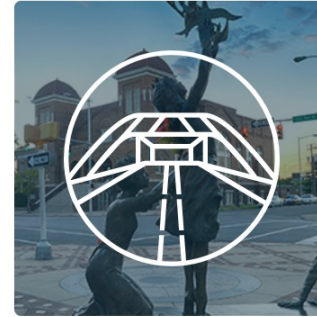
Experience Alabama



Arts & Culture



Beaches



Civil Rights Legacy



Food & Drink



History



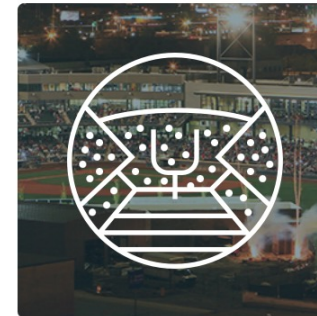
Music



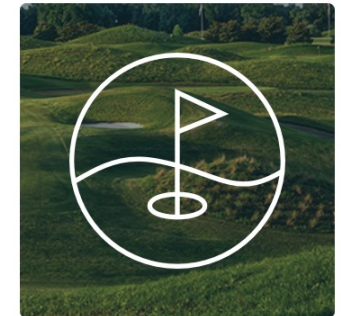
Outdoors



Science & Discovery



Sports



Year Round Golf

ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL IN FLORIDA

Florida, the nation's top travel destination, has extensive resources for visitors with special needs. Here's information to help you find a variety of accessible attractions, beaches, parks, events and activities for your vacation in the Sunshine State.

LIMITLESS FLORIDA

Navigating uneven surfaces like forest trails or the soft sand of a Florida beach without assistance is the next level of freedom.

[READ MORE](#)



- Provide accessibility information on your website & make it easy to find. Also, be as specific as possible about accessibility.

ACCESS

North Carolina



A Vacation and Travel Guide for
People with Accessibility Needs

ACCESSIBLE MINNESOTA

By Cory Lee



With Minnesota being known as the "Land of 10,000 Lakes," you may assume that it isn't the most wheelchair-friendly state. After all, wheelchairs and water tend not to mix very well. However, Minnesota has a ton of wheelchair-accessible attractions. Here are some of my favorites:

WESTWOOD HILLS NATURE CENTER

This nature center in St. Louis Park has a wonderful interpretive center and more than two miles of paved, boardwalk and crushed concrete trails surrounding Westwood Lake. I could easily roll on all of the trail terrains with my wheelchair. After spending a nice day outdoors, be sure to visit the nearby **REMS Virtual Reality Lab** for some accessible VR adventures. It's not every day that you can go scuba diving as a wheelchair user, so this virtual reality experience isn't to be missed!

SCIENCE MUSEUM OF MINNESOTA

Accessibility is fantastic at this highly interactive museum in St. Paul, where exhibits on space travel, dinosaurs and more are spacious and accommodating. You can also see interesting shows in the Science Live Theater or watch a film on a giant screen in the Omnitheater. Personal care attendants get free admission when visiting with a client, and there's a family restroom on level four.

CARLOS CREEK WINERY

If you're looking for a place to relax and unwind, Carlos Creek Winery in Alexandria is one of the state's most scenic places to spend time, and it's completely wheelchair accessible.

Photos courtesy of Cory Lee, @curbfreecorylee, unless otherwise noted.

In addition to wine tastings (the blueberry is my favorite), it has delicious food, and you may even enjoy some live music during your visit. Next door at **22 Northmen Brewing Company**, you'll find a wide variety of beer and **STOKE Wood-Fired Pizza**, which I'd highly recommend. It was seriously some of the most delicious pizza I've ever eaten.

After rolling around Minnesota's attractions all day, you'll need an accessible hotel, where you can rest and refuel for the next day of exploration. There are many hotels in Minnesota with accessible facilities. I stayed at the **Fairfield Inn & Suites** in Alexandria and the **Hampton Inn & Suites** in downtown St. Paul. Both had roll-in showers, grab bars and enough space for me to maneuver easily around the rooms.

These are only a few of Minnesota's many accessible offerings. Now the only question is, where do you want to roll in the "Land of 10,000 Lakes?"

MEET CORY

After being diagnosed with spinal muscular atrophy at two, Cory's thirst for adventure never ceased. He has visited all seven continents sharing his accessible – and not so accessible – adventures. A four-time Webby Award winner, he has written for publications including *Condé Nast Traveler*, *National Geographic* and *Lonely Planet*.

FOLLOW

You can follow Cory's travel adventures at CurbFreeWithCoryLee.com or follow him on social media:

Facebook: @CurbFree
Instagram: @curbfreecorylee
TikTok: @curbfreecorylee
Twitter: @coryleetsweets



Westwood Hills Nature Center, St. Louis Park



Carlos Creek Winery, Alexandria



Science Museum of Minnesota, St. Paul



Myre-Big Island State Park, Albert Lea, photo courtesy of Minnesota DNR

EXPLORING WITH TRACK CHAIRS

All-terrain, electric-powered track chairs are available for free to wheelchair users at several locations statewide. Track chairs make it possible to go exploring in new ways, often on trails not suitable for regular wheelchairs.

Minnesota State Parks with Track Chairs:

- **Camden State Park** (near Marshall), a quiet spot on the Redwood River.
 - **Crow Wing State Park** (Brainerd), where the Crow Wing and Mississippi rivers meet.
 - **Lake Bemidji State Park** (Bemidji), where unusual plants inhabit a tamarack bog.
 - **McCarthy Beach State Park** (near Hibbing), where the sugar sand beach is now accessible.
 - **Maplewood State Park** (Pelican Rapids), a particularly beautiful spot in the fall.
 - **Myre-Big Island State Park** (Albert Lea), where you can see an abundance of spring wildflowers on a 1.5-mile loop around Big Island.
- The **Jay C. Hormel Nature Center** in Austin, where there are nine miles of trails, also has three track chairs. Reservations are recommended. Note that a vehicle permit is required to enter state parks, with a discount available if you have a hang tag for a disability.

EXPLORE MORE

See more of Cory's photos and discover other accessible destinations in Minnesota.

ExploreMinnesota.com/Accessible



- Work with disabled writers and influencers to promote the destination. That first-hand perspective from a fellow wheelchair user can be the needle that moves the thread to book a vacation.

- Instagram usernames of wheelchair-using travelers/influencers:

@curbfreecorylee

@sylvia_longmire

@wheelchairtraveling

@havewheelchairwilltravel

@realchelseabear

@wheelchairtravel

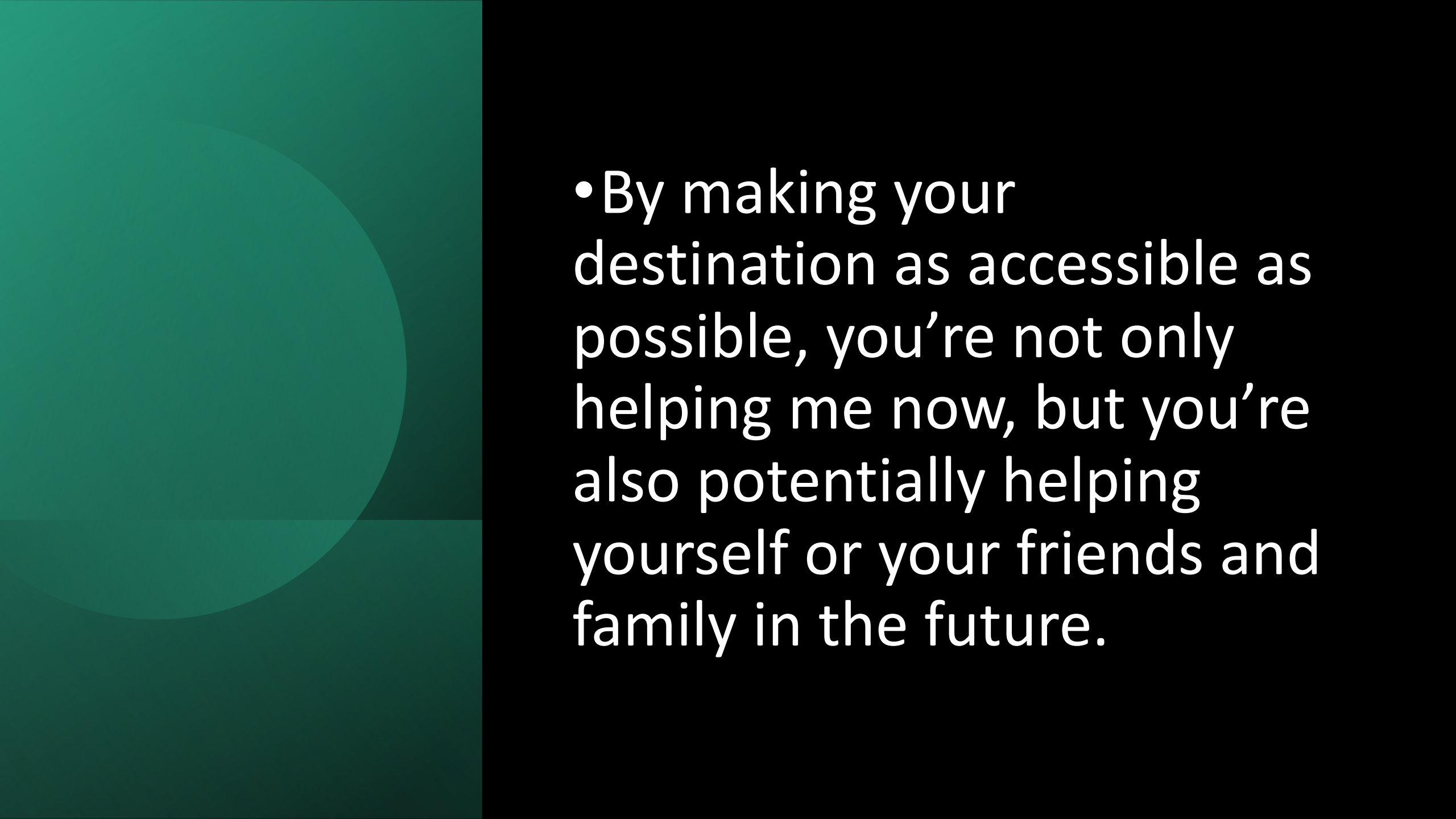
Put wheelchair users
in your advertising
(commercials/ads/
social media/etc)





A photograph of a wheelchair in a dimly lit room. The wheelchair is the central focus, with its metal frame and black seat and backrest clearly visible. The lighting is dramatic, with strong highlights on the metal and deep shadows elsewhere. The background is a plain, light-colored wall. At the bottom of the image, there is a solid green horizontal bar.

Why is it important to attract
wheelchair users to your
destination?

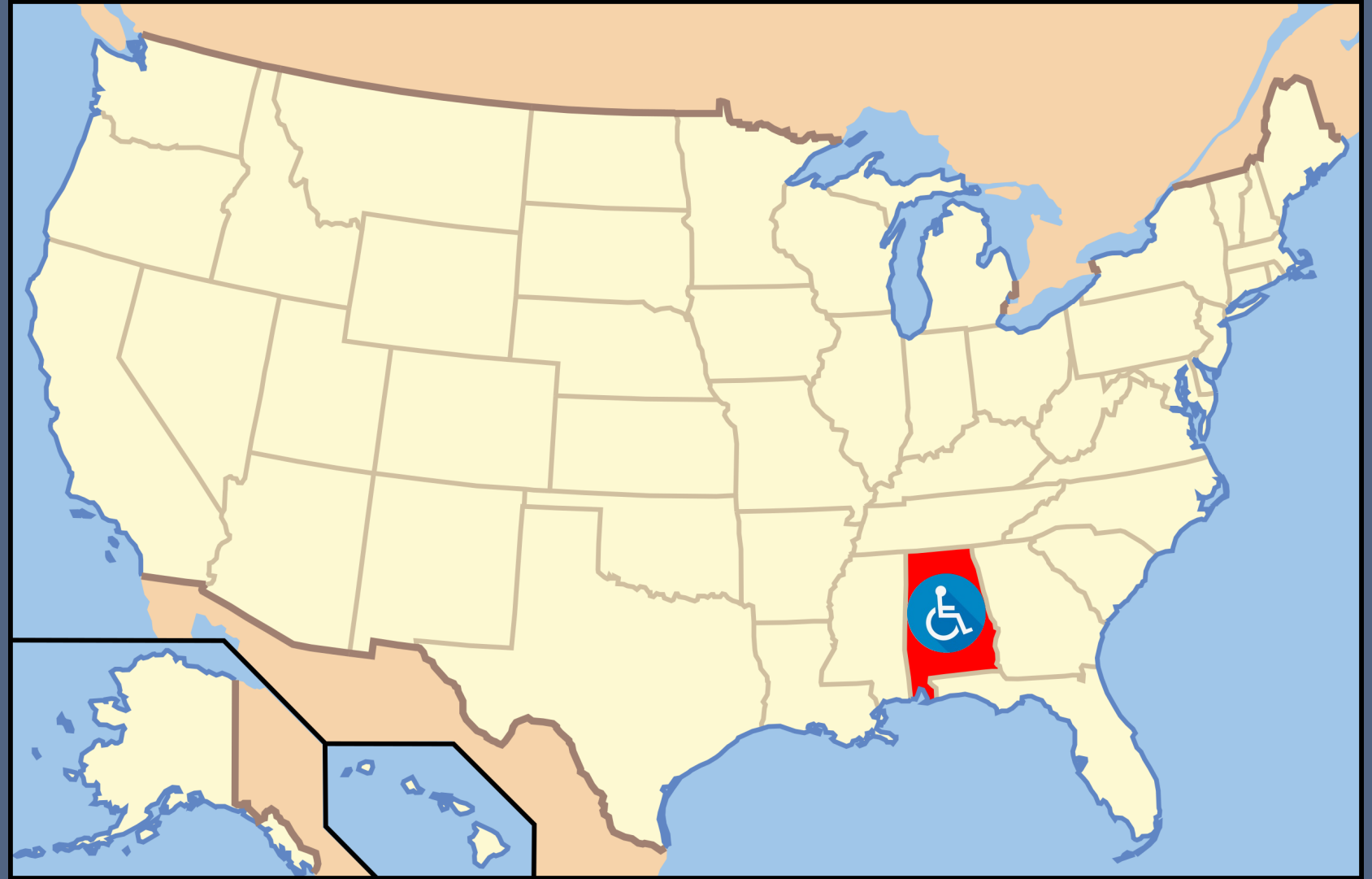
- 
- By making your destination as accessible as possible, you're not only helping me now, but you're also potentially helping yourself or your friends and family in the future.

Approximately 1
in 4 people have a
disability.

13% of those
people have a
mobility-related
disability.

- According to a recent survey conducted by the Open Doors Organization, adults with disabilities spend over 58 billion dollars per year just on travel.

Let's make
Alabama an
inclusive
leader!



Let's connect



@curbfreecorylee



Curb Free with Cory Lee



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