

A portrait of Erika Riggs, a woman with long dark hair, looking slightly to the right. The background is a blurred city street at night with lights.

Erika Riggs

Disability Law Group

FEATURED CRISP CLIENT

The law firms that stand the test of time are built by attorneys who care deeply about their clients, go above and beyond for their communities, and invest in the future.

Erika Riggs is building such a law firm: **Disability Law Group**.

"We specialize in Social Security Disability and Veterans Disability benefits," she explains. "We are based in Michigan, but because these areas of law deal with federal disability benefits, we can help clients no matter where they live in the country."

Disability Law Group (DLG) has generated notable momentum just a few short years after its inception, thanks in large part to the meaningful commitment Erika and her partners Randall Mansour and Mandy Kelly have made.

"The best part of owning my own disability firm with my partners is realizing our vision that we manifested years ago and watching it come to life quicker and even better than we had imagined," she says. "We get to help our clients on our terms, which means that we get to see through our mission to improve lives — the lives of our clients, our community, and our team — in the best way we know how."

You may recognize Erika as the firm owner who walked away from last year's Game Changers Summit with the keys to Michael's new Tesla Model S Plaid as the 2022 Crisp Effect winner.

As part of the Crisp Effect challenge, she submitted monthly videos to document her challenges, successes, and transformation over the course of the year. Her final video, as well as those of the other Crisp Effect Challengers, was compiled by the world-class Crisp production team, and an initial round of voting by peers and larger communities decided the top 10 videos that premiered at the Game Changers Summit 2022. At the Summit, the audience voted live to decide the top winner and recipient of Michael's car

— and they chose Erika.

Thanks to Erika's persistence and vulnerability, she stood out in her monthly videos and pushed herself to achieve massive growth in both her personal and professional lives.

But that was just the beginning. Erika continued to capitalize on the momentum of her Crisp Effect win as well as her Crisp Coach membership.

As she describes:

"In less than one year of working with Crisp, we had **signed more than triple the amount of cases from the year prior. We went from less than 20 staff to now nearly 50.** We also **took over three different disability practices, totaling in nearly 500 cases and new clients** that came to our firm. We have been continuing on this **mega-growth trend**, and have now already **outgrown our space** we expanded into not even one year ago which doubled our original square footage.

Since partnering with Crisp, we also started a podcast, have hosted numerous webinars and CLEs, launched our monthly newsletter, and so much more. We are looking into soon purchasing our own space to call home for our firm with plenty of room to grow into and are gearing up to announce our DLG scholarship for high school students to help them pay for college."

The community response to DLG's work has been overwhelming. **Erika's firm has amassed an impressive 500+ 5-star Google reviews and maintains a 5-star rating on all their social media platforms — all in less than five years.** Additionally, the firm has established themselves as local staples, both through their own initiatives and their involvement in others.

This year, Erika was invited to participate in her local charity Turning Point's 7th annual "Stepping Out with the Stars" event as a local celebrity guest dancer, where she took home the Judge's Choice award. This experience was meaningful in so many ways, as it meant she got to raise funds for Turning Point's critical programs that support women and children who are or have been victims of domestic or sexual violence.

"I could not say no to this invite, even at the very big risk of falling on my face during my routine in front of hundreds of people!" reflects Erika. "Turning Point is a local non-profit that has always been near and dear to my heart. During my very first legal internship as a 1L, I was given the opportunity to conduct intake at Turning Point, and meeting the most resilient women amidst the most difficult time of their lives and being able to not only provide advocacy for them, but help serve as a safe place is an experience I will never forget."

DLG also hosts an annual Free Legal Aid and Resource Fair in May honoring Military Appreciation Month and Mental Health Awareness Month that has been Erika's passion project for years, even before she became an attorney.

"This is a one-stop shop where anyone can come and receive a wide array of critical community supports, including free legal advice from Disability Law Group attorneys regarding SSD and VA disability benefits, as well as attorneys who specialize in other areas of law — from criminal/record expungement to estate planning, landlord-tenant issues to employment law, and more — in addition to free health screenings, haircuts, crafts for children, community resources, and more," she explains. "Education has always played a big role in these events, and we look forward to partnering up law students and those interested in the law and health to come out to observe and volunteer as well. Some have even landed internships and jobs from past events."

Since partnering with Crisp, the public attendance for DLG's Resource Fair has grown tenfold. Erika credits the support of her Crisp Coach and the new marketing and promotional ideas she has gained to make her firm's events more successful.

Understandably, Erika says that the biggest challenge she's faced in her firm has certainly been managing all the moving parts while "growing in hyperspeed mode." But she acknowledges that it's a good problem to have, and she's been lifted up through it by a powerful support system thanks to her Crisp Coach membership.

"Partnering with like-minded law firm owners and our Crisp Coach has allowed us to build a strong network to lean on when stuck — whether about a seemingly small decision or a major transition you're contemplating," she says. "We have really evolved into this powerhouse family that is always there for each other."

Whether it's the fellow law firm owners she meets through the Crisp community or her regular Accountability Calls, Erika has successfully tapped into every resource available to her — and she's reaping the benefits in every area of her life.

"Our Crisp Coach has helped my partners and I to never lose sight of our vision and to continuously strive to reach new levels of greatness, which has made us better leaders and business owners," she says. "She continues to hold us accountable to our goals, and this has made a monumental impact on our firm's bottom line, strengthening not only our firm, but our personal lives."

In addition to business growth, Erika credits Crisp with the push she needed to look at her own personal health and well-being as just as important to her firm's success and the results speak for themselves.

"Every single day at my firm, we see firsthand the tragic experiences and difficulties people face when becoming disabled, yet I all too often would make excuses when it came to taking care of my own health," she explains.

Erika is a kickboxing and self-defense instructor, and she loves to incorporate martial arts into her health and fitness journey — an interest she shares with her sons Xander and Eli.

"This summer, my family and I made time to travel so my sons could compete in national karate tournaments, and I had the honor of coaching both my boys in soccer!" she shares.

Whether it's a whistle blown on the soccer field or an impactful business decision at her firm, we have no doubt Erika will continue to grow and impact countless lives for years to come — and we look forward to supporting her every step of the way.

