

How Forseti and AWS connect domestic violence survivors to services in real time

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AWS PUBLIC SECTOR BLOG

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In the time it takes to read this sentence, a domestic violence survivor might have decided to seek help, and the window for connecting them to safety is already closing. Research shows [88% of help-seeking](#) occurs in the moments between the acute crisis and the return to an abusive cycle. Services exist, but getting survivors connected to them is challenging. But now, technology exists that can make that connection fast enough to matter.

Across the United States, [more than 64 million adults](#) have experienced intimate partner violence in their lifetimes, but [82% of abused women](#) never contact an agency or counselor and 74% never seek medical care for their abuse. Of those who do come forward, the majority never connect with the services that could change their trajectory. When a law enforcement officer responds to a domestic violence call, the first few minutes represent a singular opportunity: the survivor is present, the danger clear, and the system paying attention. What happens next depends entirely on whether the response infrastructure can match that moment.

[Forseti](#), a public safety technology company, built the [Honest Assessment Response Tool \(HART\)](#) to meet survivors in that moment. Running on [Amazon Web Services \(AWS\)](#), HART digitizes on-scene domestic violence risk screening, connects survivors to services in real time, and gives state agencies population-level visibility into intimate partner violence patterns.

Why timing matters: The research case for real-time connection

The evidence on timing is unambiguous. Foundational research on the violence cycle identifies a narrow **“Open Window Phase”** between the acute battering incident and the subsequent calm period. During this window, a survivor realizes they can’t stop the violence, is most likely to reach out for help, and is most receptive to intervention.

When that window closes, the drop-off is severe because survivors frequently experience post-traumatic stress that inhibits long-term planning, combined with manipulation and coercion from the abuser that compromises their ability to follow up independently. Even among highly motivated survivors who call the National Domestic Violence Hotline and express clear intention to act, [only 24.6%](#) who intended to go to a shelter actually did within 2 weeks. Only 31.9% contacted law enforcement as planned.

An immediate, active connection improves action fivefold: [72.7% of survivors](#) who received an immediate referral connected with behavioral health resources, compared to only 15.7% for those who received a passive referral. This is the gap Forseti closes. Rather than handing a survivor a phone number and hoping they call, HART creates a real-time digital connection between the officer on scene, the completed risk assessment, and the local service provider, while the survivor is still present and receptive.

The challenge: Paper processes in a time-critical system

A [2025 audit](#) examined a sample of domestic violence incident reports from the Dallas Police Department and found that among intimate partner cases, 28% were missing a completed Lethality Assessment Program (LAP) form. Paper forms moved slowly through interdepartmental mail. Even when officers completed the LAP at the scene, 35% of sampled forms never reached the database caseworkers use to track high-risk victims. The share of high-risk victims who spoke with a shelter or counselor at the scene had fallen from over 40% when the program launched in 2012 to approximately 20% during the audit period.

Dallas is not an outlier. Research shows that standard care for domestic violence includes identification, but rarely includes providing support, facilitating access to support, or following up. When it does, it typically consists of printed educational material or a phone number to a community-based advocacy agency, materials that previous research suggests survivors feel a need to hide from the abuser.

The solution: Digital connection changes outcomes

HART replaces the paper workflow entirely. Officers complete the same Domestic Violence Supplemental Form and Lethality Assessment on a device at the scene. The record is structured, validated, and shareable the moment it’s submitted. Behind HART sits **County Connect**, Forseti’s referral infrastructure that routes each completed assessment in real time to the district attorney, local domestic violence service providers, and other agencies with a need to know.

No paper to scan. No courier to wait for. No caseworker retyping data from a handwritten form. When officers identify a survivor as being in high danger, the local domestic violence service provider receives a referral while the officer is still on scene.

This approach mirrors the evidence-based model validated by the [Lethality Assessment Program-Maryland Model](#), which combines standardized screening with immediate service connection. And these digital connections work, as observed with a digital warm handoff tool, the **Domestic Violence Report and Referral (DVRR) system**. (*A warm handoff is when care is transferred between caregivers with the patient present.*) Among [1,366 DV-related emergency department](#) visits between 2014 and 2018, DVRR-associated visits increased patients' odds of reaching advocacy services for the populations most underserved by legacy systems:

- **2.6 times** for Latinx female survivors
- **4.66 times** for Black survivors
- **12.8 times** for male survivors

HART builds on this model by adding digital infrastructure that eliminates the manual steps where connections are lost.

Addressing the geographic lottery: Rural communities need real-time infrastructure most

Women in small rural areas experience domestic violence at rates of [22.5% compared to 15.5%](#) for urban women. Women in small rural areas also report more severe events: more than 60% report four or more events of physical violence compared to 40% of urban women. Yet services in rural areas have long been limited due to geographic isolation, lack of transportation, and limited access to legal services, housing, and health services.

HART's multistate architecture addresses this directly. Forseti's single cloud platform provides standardized data collection across **14 states**, providing an officer in a rural North Carolina county with the same assessment tools, the same real-time referral pathways, and the same data quality as a detective in a metropolitan police department. The platform eliminates the geographic lottery of response quality that currently defines domestic violence intervention in America.

Built on AWS for security and scale

HART and County Connect run on [AWS GovCloud \(US\)](#). The platform is fully compliant with the FBI's Criminal Justice Information Services (CJIS) Security Policy, with a formal assessment and authorization on record, and holds SOC 2 Type II compliance. This is the security posture that law enforcement, state agencies, and domestic violence service providers require before survivor and case data touches a cloud platform.

The platform is powered by [Amazon OpenSearch Service](#) and [Amazon CloudWatch](#). OpenSearch Service powers search and analytics across incident records so prosecutors and state researchers can query structured domestic violence data instead of paging through PDFs. CloudWatch provides around-the-clock monitoring for a system that must be available the moment an officer is standing in a survivor's home.

As Forseti has grown from a single-agency pilot to a multistate platform, AWS infrastructure has enabled a small team to support more than 160 agencies without rebuilding architecture for each new state deployment.

Impact by the numbers

HART is now in use across more than 160 law enforcement and domestic violence service provider agencies in 14 states, with more than 10,000 survivors assessed to date. Forseti is also collaborating with leading domestic violence researchers and institutions across the country to analyze assessment data and improve how agencies nationwide respond to domestic violence calls for service.

"All agencies need to be on the same team to assist survivors, and that's exactly what we are doing here at Forseti," says Warren Lautz, chief operating officer, Forseti. "It is unacceptable to let archaic processes hinder communities' ability to save lives."

Looking ahead

For criminal justice and social service agencies working to close the gap between a 911 call and a connected support system, Forseti and HART demonstrate what becomes possible when on-scene data collection and statewide infrastructure run on the same secure cloud platform. The research is clear: real-time connection during the critical window of opportunity [increases the share of survivors who reach advocacy services](#), and agencies implementing the Lethality Assessment Program have seen a [significant reduction in intimate partner homicide](#). As new states and metropolitan agencies come online, the model offers a path from fragmented paper processes to coordinated, real-time response at scale.

Learn more about [AWS social impact](#).



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