

# ***NOT-EASY ANSWERS FOR SPANISH E-Z PASS USERS***

April 2010

## **Background**

- Last summer, ACS/Xerox – the company that signed a \$200 million contract with the MTA, Port Authority and Thruway Authority for customer service operations – instituted a pay-per-call model, through which customer service workers are paid according to the number of calls they handle.
- Workers have criticized the pay-per-call model saying that they feel pressured to rush callers in order to maximize the number of calls they handle.
- In particular, some of the Spanish/English bilingual workers at the call-in center have said that the pay-per-call model has undermined their ability to answer calls from Spanish-speaking EZ Pass users, whose calls are generally longer in duration.
- In response to these complaints, the Office of the Public Advocate surveyed the EZ Pass call center to evaluate their ability to serve Spanish-speaking callers.

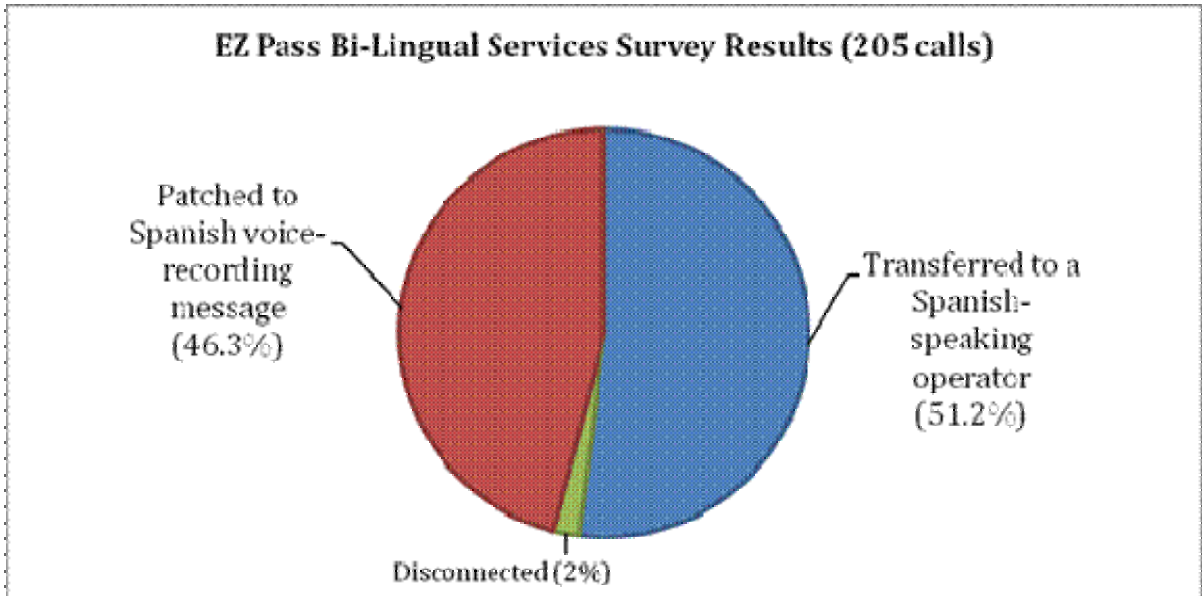
## **Methodology**

- During four days in April, callers placed 205 phone calls to the EZ Pass Spanish-speaking line (1-800-333-8655). Phone calls were made between 9.00 AM and 6.30 PM.
- Callers asked the customer service representative who answered the phone “Hola, hablas Espanol?”
- After being told to hold, callers were either transferred to a Spanish-language voice-recording message or to a Spanish-language operator. If the caller was transferred to a Spanish-language operator, he or she immediately said “Lo siento, adios” before hanging up.
- The Office of the Public Advocate recorded the outcome of each call.

## **Main Finding**

- EZ Pass call-in center does not appear to have adequate personnel available to answer questions from Spanish-speaking

callers. Of the 205 phone calls to the EZ Pass Spanish-speaking line, 93 calls (46.3%) were transferred to a Spanish voice-recording message that told callers to call back or that no one is available. Callers were not given the opportunity to leave a message.



### Other Observations

- Call-in representatives are often seemingly willing to help, but are unable to do so in Spanish.
- It is particularly difficult to reach a Spanish-speaking EZ Pass representative after 3:00 PM.