

FOOD INSECURITY SOLUTIONS WORKING GROUP HISTORY

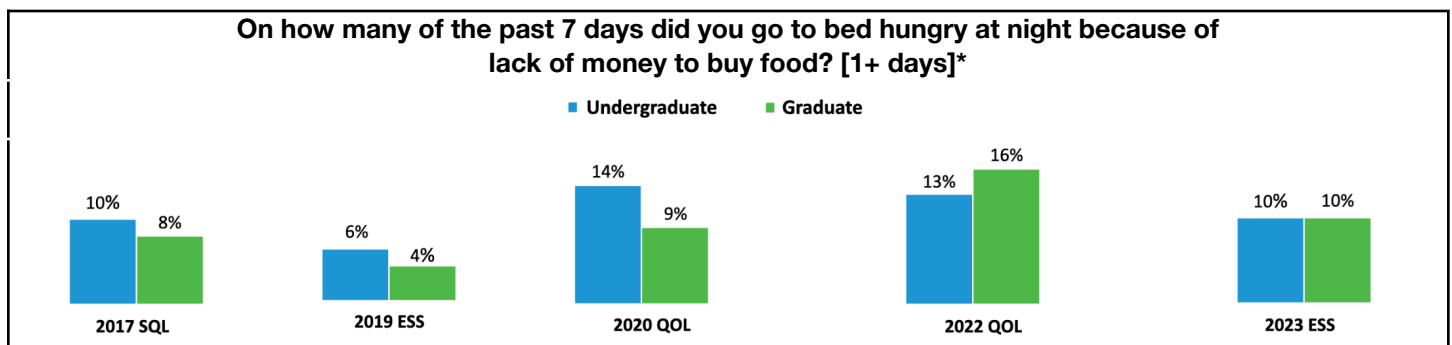
- At MIT, we've been thinking about food security for a long time. The [Food Insecurity Solutions Working Group \(FISWG\)](#) met in the fall of 2017 to explore the nature of the problem and to identify possible solutions.
- The group focused on three primary areas: 1) lack of financial resources; 2) students have limited time to eat; and 3) students report not having the skills or knowledge to budget effectively or cook for themselves.
- Initiatives from the FISWG included [SwipeShare](#), [Accessing Resources at MIT \(ARM\) Coalition](#), a [financial literacy staff member in Student Financial Services \(SFS\)](#), and the start of centralizing resources online.

PRESENT DAY: FOOD SECURITY ACTION TEAM

- Building on the work of the FISWG - and following an upward trend of data reporting students going to bed hungry (see below) - [Food Security Action Team \(FSAT\)](#) was formed in 2020 to ensure a well-organized and coordinated effort around food security is implemented reliably year-after-year.
- Focused efforts on vulnerable student populations - such as graduate students, first gen/low income, students in Cook-for-Yourself (CFY) communities, and fraternities, sororities, and independent living groups (FSILGs) - while encouraging student leaders to help develop channels to raise awareness among other students about programs and resources.
- Developed partnership with local at-cost grocery store, Daily Table to provide free grocery deliveries to students living on campus and educational programs at their location in Central Square
- Centralized resources on the [DoingWell Food and Financial Resources site](#) organized by FISWG themes.

KEY DATA (ALL AVAILABLE ON THE [INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH WEBSITE](#))

- **Food security trends over time (2017-2023):** According to the [2023 Undergraduate Enrolled Student Survey](#) and [2023 Graduate Enrolled Student Survey](#), 10% (N = 42) of undergraduate respondents reported going to bed hungry because of lack of money to buy food 1+ days, compared to 13% (N = 189) in 2022. This is a three-point improvement. Ten percent (N = 89) of graduate respondents reported going to bed hungry 1+ days compared to 16% (N = 351) in 2022. This is a six-point improvement. The following chart provides additional context:



Data Sources: [2023 Undergraduate Enrolled Student Survey](#) (Invited: 4,511; Response Rate: 12%; N=529) and [2023 Graduate Enrolled Student Survey](#) (Invited: 6,629; Response Rate: 18%; N=1,128)

- **Awareness of resources:** According to the 2023 Undergraduate and Graduate Enrolled Student surveys, 54% of undergraduates, 45% master's respondents, and 31% of doctoral respondents "somewhat" or "strongly agreed" that they are aware of the resources MIT provides to help students with food.
- **Barriers to having enough to eat:** According to the 2023 Undergraduate Enrolled Student Survey, the top three reported barriers to having enough to eat for undergraduate respondents were: "Lack of time to purchase groceries/cook a meal," "Food not being available at times compatible with your schedule," and "Lack of time to eat." According to the 2023 Graduate Enrolled Student Survey, "cost of food" was the most commonly reported barrier for master's and doctoral students, followed by "lack of time to purchase groceries/cook a meal" and "lack of time to eat." See the chart below for more details.

SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

- **SwipeShare:** Support staff distribute swipes to students in need from a pool that includes swipes donated by meal-plan holders. About 16,000 swipes have been donated and distributed since the program started in 2018.

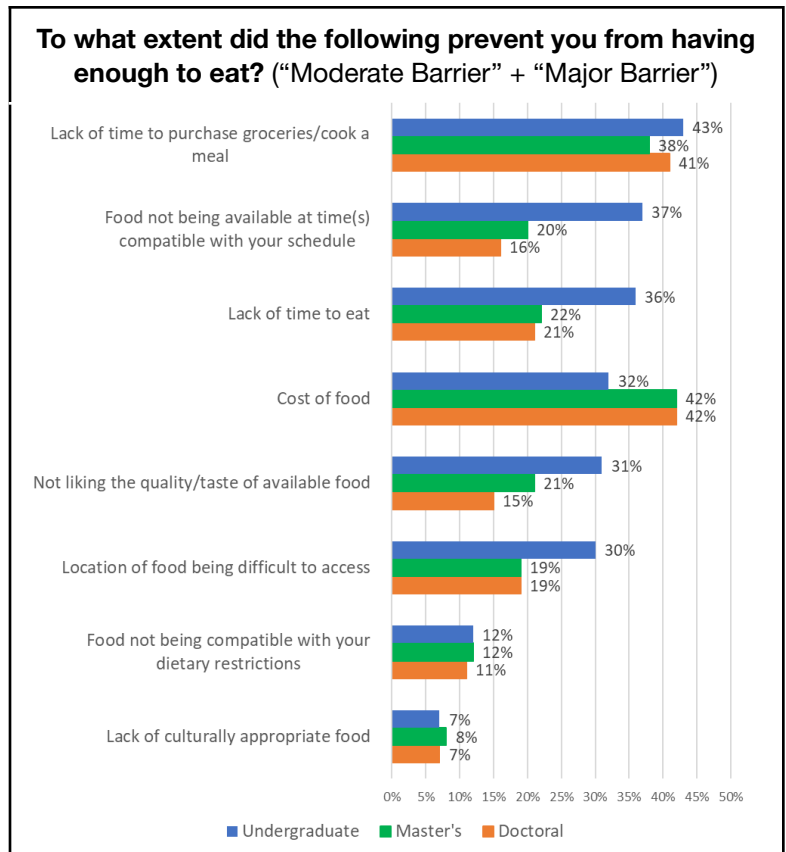
- **Emergency Funds and Grants:** Available to undergraduate and graduate students experiencing difficulty accessing resources.
- **Proactive Meal Swipes:** Highest-need undergraduate students residing in CFY communities, FSILGs, and off-campus who are not on meal plans are provided 15 swipes at the start of each semester.
- **Winter Break Bridge Meal Program:** Meal vouchers to off-campus vendors are provided to undergraduate students living on campus during winter break when dining halls are closed.
- **IAP Dining Dollars:** Highest-need undergraduate students are issued \$125 in Dining Dollars each week during IAP to supplement the cost of groceries and food while dining halls are closed.

ACCESS RESOURCES AND GET INVOLVED

- All graduate students and undergraduates can access a full range of support options in one place on the [DoingWell Food and Financial Resources site](#). This includes meal request forms, emergency fund information, SwipeShare details, Daily Table delivery information, guides to cooking for yourself, financial education and budgeting resources, food guides and maps, and local grocer and shuttle information.
- Students can also contact [Student Support Services](#) or [GradSupport](#). No students should ever go hungry for any reason, and these offices will always help someone struggling to access food.
- [Food security communications](#) are sent regularly to students through the Undergraduate Association (UA) and Graduate Student Council (GSC) each semester.
- The FSAT's [newsletter](#) is sent to the community several times a year.
- We maintain an easily accessible [Google folder with food security promotional materials](#).
- There is a [Grad Student Food Resource Fair](#) every year.
- The DSL senior staff meets monthly with the UA and GSC, often discussing food security efforts.
- Students are encouraged to join the [Food Security Action Team](#).

PROMOTING HIGH-QUALITY FOOD SERVICES ON CAMPUS

- **Retail Dining Review (2022-23):** Consolidated food offerings in three locations: West Campus (W20), Main Group (Bosworth's, Forbes, Sloan and Hayden, 24/7 healthy vending), and Kendall Square.
 - September 2023: W20 reopened four retail dining outlets; close to an agreement with a new grocer.
 - Food trucks offered outside of W20 and Outfinite.
- **House Dining Review (2023-24):** Issues include perceived poor food quality for value, access, and allergies.
 - Survey and deep dive to better understand the issues (e.g., six undergraduate dining halls operating with six kitchens and ~2,800 students on the meal plan).
 - Present findings to the Committee on Student Life (comprising faculty, staff, and students) which will help to make recommendations to Chancellor Nobles and the MIT Senior Team in February 2024.
 - Request for Proposal informed by review resulting in a new dining contract starting in July 2025.
 - Understand subsidy needs to deliver high-quality, reasonably priced program.
 - Consider financial aid implications.



Data Sources: [2023 Undergraduate Enrolled Student Survey](#) (Invited: 4,511; Response Rate: 12%; N=529); [2023 Graduate Enrolled Student Survey](#) (Invited: 6,629; Response Rate: 18%; N=1,128)