



Robert Shireman is director of higher education excellence and senior fellow at The Century Foundation working on education policy with a focus on affordability, quality assurance, and consumer protections.

He served in the Clinton White House as a senior policy advisor to the National Economic Council, and in the Obama administration as deputy undersecretary of education. In 2004 he founded The Institute for College Access & Success, and in 2011 launched the policy organization California Competes.

In his various roles since 1989 Shireman has led successful efforts to reform student loans, streamline the financial aid process, promote campus diversity, and protect consumers from predatory colleges. He has shepherded the evolution of the nation's income-based student loan repayment system from its initial adoption in 1992 to its expansion and improvement by President Barack Obama. He organized the federal response to emerging signs of predatory for-profit career training in 2009, leading to a widely discussed set of regulatory reforms and enforcement actions. Shireman's analysis of local needs in California prompted changes in the funding formula for that state's community colleges, following on his earlier work to improve the ethnic and economic diversity of California's private colleges. He led an effort that significantly simplified the process of applying for federal college aid, and pressed for and ultimately won the elimination of costly middlemen from the federal loan programs so that more grant aid could be made available to low-income students.

Under Shireman's leadership, in 2018 The Century Foundation won a contract with the State of California to develop recommendations for reforming the state's approach to college affordability. In addition to his role at Century, Shireman serves on the board of [uAspire](#), a national nonprofit that helps low-income students find quality, affordable college options, and [The Opportunity Institute](#), an education policy think tank.

Shireman holds a Bachelor's degree in Economics from the University of California at Berkeley, a Master's in Education from Harvard, and a Master's in Public Administration from the University of San Francisco.