I am a graduate student specializing in the 20th century U.S., African American history, Black Studies, and popular music studies. In 2018 I graduated with an M.A. in Southern Studies from the University of Mississippi. My thesis on how the Oxford, Mississippi-based Fat Possum Records leveraged tropes about southern Black men to market hill country blues to fans of indie rock and rap in the 1990s was awarded the Lucille and Motee Daniels Award for Best Thesis in Southern Studies. I recently completed my M.A. thesis in History, "Reading the Seventies in *Creem* Magazine," which explores the shifting politics of the Detroit-based rock magazine *Creem* during the 1970s. That project was completed entirely during the early stages of the pandemic, so I have been learning how to creatively respond to some of the challenges the pandemic has placed on academic researchers.

I will soon complete course work and comprehensive exams, and in the course of the next year the expectation of my program is that I write my dissertation prospectus and achieve candidacy. Under normal circumstances, I would make a research trip to visit the archives in Michigan I plan to draw from for my research. Given the current situation, the funding from this grant will allow me to purchase primary source material so that I can do the research necessary to complete the prospectus. I cannot afford to purchase these materials without assistance and will have great difficulty writing a prospectus without access to any primary source material. The access to the library's interlibrary loan system is quite limited at the moment as other libraries around the country that may have these (somewhat obscure) books may or may not be staffed or lending, which is why it is necessary for me to purchase them. Without having access to any primary source material to write my prospectus, I will be behind in conceptualizing my project and less able to adequately use the limited time I may have in the archive later. This funding would help my progress in my program not be slowed by the pandemic.