

# Hayes Smart Start marks first year with over 100 graduates

*Hayes & Associates celebrates latest cohort and looks ahead to program's future*

OMAHA, NE, UNITED STATES, July 6, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Hayes & Associates](https://www.einpresswire.com/), an Omaha-based accounting firm, celebrated the latest graduates of Hayes Smart Start: Financial Literacy for Small Business Owners on Wednesday, marking one year since the program's first pilot cohort launched in July 2025. About 25 small business owners and entrepreneurs were recognized during the event, bringing the program's total number of graduates to nearly 100 in its first year.



Hayes Smart Start: Financial Literacy for Small Business Owners program is a 10-week course to help small business owners and entrepreneurs better understand finance and business.

Hayes created the online, 10-week course to help small business owners and entrepreneurs better understand financial and business topics, equipping them to make more confident decisions for long-term success.

“

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*Frank Hayes, president of  
Hayes & Associates*

“What means the most to me is seeing people's growth since they took our course. So many of them have followed up to thank us and tell us what changes they made,” said Frank Hayes, president of Hayes & Associates. “There are a lot of talented business owners in this community who just need a little boost of knowledge to help them move in the right direction. When they win, we all win. We are grateful for the opportunity to help our community through this course.”

The graduation celebration included remarks from City of Omaha Mayor John Ewing, Jr., and

leaders of Hayes & Associates. Mayor Ewing reminded graduates to seize every opportunity they could to continue learning and growing. He also highlighted how hard work is directly tied to success during a demonstration he did with the graduates, sharing that when businesses succeed, it ripples outward to the success of family members and the entire community.

“It was an honor to have Mayor Ewing attend and speak at our graduation. It’s also very fulfilling for us to cheer on those who successfully go through our course and hand them their certificate,” said Davida Adams Stewart, senior manager of client experience and talent management at Hayes & Associates. “Graduates are feeling less fear about understanding financial reports and are more prepared to grow their businesses. That is exactly why we created this program.”

In June, Hayes & Associates received the 2026 Greater Omaha Chamber Business Excellence Award for Civic Engagement, in part for the impact of Smart Start and the firm’s broader commitment to strengthening the Omaha community through education, service and support for business owners.

Hayes & Associates looks forward to continuing Smart Start through its nonprofit entity, Hayes Cares, and is actively seeking donor and sponsor support to help the program continue growing in the years ahead. The next cohort begins on Sept. 21. To learn more, visit [hayes.cpa](http://hayes.cpa).

#### About Hayes & Associates

Hayes & Associates is one of Nebraska’s longest-standing and most culturally diverse CPA firms, offering trusted, personalized financial support for more than four decades. The firm has deep



Frank Hayes, president of Hayes & Associates, celebrates with Hayes Smart Start graduates as the program recognizes nearly 100 small business owners and entrepreneurs served in its first year.



City of Omaha Mayor John Ewing, Jr. congratulates Hayes Smart Start graduates during the program’s latest graduation celebration, encouraging small business owners to keep learning, growing and seizing opportunities.

roots in Omaha and is part of the national BDO Alliance, bringing broad expertise to businesses, nonprofits, government entities and individuals.

### Hayes & Associates Smart Start: Financial Literacy for Small Business Owners

#### What It Is:

- A 10-week online course designed to help small business owners and entrepreneurs better understand their finances, build sustainable growth and gain long-term confidence.
- Business owners and entrepreneurs can learn more by visiting [Hayes.cpa](https://www.hayes.cpa) and clicking the "Financial Education" button.
- Participants attend an orientation session and several in-person "office hour" sessions over 10 weeks.
- Participants complete the online course modules as their schedules allow each week.
- Completion earns a certificate.
- The next cohort begins in September.

#### Who It's For:

Entrepreneurs and small business owners

People who may not see themselves as business owners but are earning self-employed income through services like hairstyling, ride-sharing or cleaning services, home-based businesses, freelancing and more

#### Why It Matters:

Many small businesses lose money simply because they don't know their numbers. This expert-led course equips business owners with practical tools and hands-on support to grow financial know-how.

Designed to be welcoming and practical- no shame, no stress, just tools that work from



Hayes Smart Start graduates celebrate the completion of the 10-week Financial Literacy for Small Business Owners course, marking one year since Hayes & Associates launched the program's first pilot cohort in July 2025.



Graduates of Hayes Smart Start: Financial Literacy for Small Business Owners receive certificates after completing the 10-week online course, which helps entrepreneurs better understand budgeting, cash flow, pricing, financial reports and business gro

experienced and knowledgeable financial pros

Targets culturally diverse income earners operating outside of traditional 9-to-5 jobs and small business owners

What Participants Learn:

- How to separate personal and business finances
- Budgeting, cash flow and how to read financial reports
- Pricing for profit
- Debt management
- Legal business structures and CPA partnerships
- Branding, marketing and business growth planning
- Preparing to apply for loans and grants

Cost

Tuition is waived thanks to funding from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's North and South Omaha Recovery Grant Program.

The course is valued at \$1,000 per person.

About the North & South Omaha Recovery Grant Program (NSORG)

NSORG is a Nebraska Department of Economic Development initiative created to support post-pandemic economic recovery and growth in historically underserved communities. Hayes & Associates was awarded grant funding to develop and lead its new financial literacy program because of the firm's long-standing role in serving culturally diverse business owners.

Hayes & Associates Organizational Overview

Hayes & Associates is a respected Omaha-based accounting, financial planning and tax preparation firm, serving a wide array of clients, including small business owners and entrepreneurs. As a member of the BDO Alliance, a nationwide association of accounting and finance experts, the firm serves clients nationwide while remaining deeply rooted in Omaha's community. Hayes team members are dedicated to giving back and advancing financial literacy through strategic partnerships, speaking engagements and other initiatives, including Smart Start.

[Learn More About Hayes & Associates](#)

Course Facilitators

With decades of combined experience, the course facilitators guide participants through each module, dedicating time to answering questions and providing face-to-face advice to business owners over the 10-week course.

Frank Hayes

President & Shareholder

Frank Hayes founded Hayes & Associates in 1983, building one of Nebraska's most respected CPA firms. Recognized for his leadership and community impact, including his induction into the

Omaha Business Hall of Fame, Frank brings decades of business and financial expertise to course participants.

Davida Adams Stewart

Senior Manager, Client Experience & Talent Management

Davida leads client onboarding and relationship development at Hayes & Associates, helping clients and employees access the tools they need to grow. A UNO graduate passionate about business process improvement, Davida focuses on empowering course participants with the knowledge and systems they need for long-term success.

LaTricia Harris

Senior Operations Manager, Recruitment & HR Activities

LaTricia manages operations, recruitment, and HR strategy at Hayes & Associates, leveraging more than 20 years of leadership experience across multiple industries. As an active community leader, she brings a practical, people-first approach to supporting course participants as they build greater financial confidence.

[Learn More About Hayes & Associates Team Members](#)

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