

Turn your quilting passion into a successful business

Many people considering an investment in a longarm machine want to know how long it will take to pay for the machine.

With comfortable and reasonable business goals, it's possible to pay for your machine in as little as one year. We encourage you do some research in your area to find out how busy professional quilters are. In many cases, you'll find a backlog of six months or more, indicating that this is a terrific business opportunity.

We discovered machine quilters typically break down their services into three categories:

1. Overall Quilting

This encompasses any design that covers the quilt from edge to edge without regard for specific areas of the quilt. Examples include meandering, pantographs and simple free-motion quilting designs (typically executed in 3 to 5 hours for a queen-size quilt).

Average price range: \$0.015 to \$0.025 & up per square inch (\$20 to \$32 per square yard).

Average earnings for queen-size quilt: \$135 - \$225

2. Custom Quilting

Custom quilting is defined as quilting that differentiates a certain area of the quilt from other parts. For example, a quilt with meandering in its center portion and a separate border design is considered "custom" quilting. This includes skills such as stitching in the ditch, using more complex free-motion designs, crosshatching and individual motifs. This type of quilting typically takes 5 to 15 hours per queen-size quilt.

Average price range: \$0.02 to \$0.05 & up per square inch (\$26 to \$64 per square yard).

Average earnings for queen-size quilt: \$180-\$450

3. Heirloom Quilting

Heirloom quilting is dense, heavy quilting, often including specialty techniques such as trapunto, micro-stippling, tight crosshatching, feathers, very intricate free-motion designs, stitching in the ditch, small background fillers, custom block/ border motifs and more. Heirloom quilting can take anywhere from 10 to 40 hours per queen-size quilt.

Average price range: \$0.04 to \$0.09 & up per square inch (\$52 or more per square yard).

Average earnings for queen-size quilt: \$360 and up



The numbers

We studied machine quilting services and pricing all around the United States and put together some averages:

9,000

The average queen-size quilt is approximately 90 x 100 inches, or 9,000 square inches.

\$0.02

The average price for machine quilting with a simple overall quilting design is approximately \$0.02 per square inch.

\$180

At this price, a queen-size quilt would bring you approximately \$180 in labor costs alone.
 $9,000 \times 2¢ \text{ (per sq. in.)} = \180

Return on investment

When you look at these figures in terms of your investment in the machine, it breaks down like this:

Machine	Price	Number of quilts needed for total pay-off	Number of quilts per week for 1-year pay-off	Number of quilts per week for 2-year pay-off	Number of quilts per week for 5-year pay-off
Millie30	\$21,700	120	2.3	1.15	0.46
Millie	\$19,700	109	2.09	1.05	0.41
Freddie	\$18,600	103	1.98	0.99	0.39
Lucey	\$13,400	74	1.42	0.71	0.28
Lenni	\$11,300	62	1.19	0.59	0.23

Income projections

Quilters around the nation report that they complete anywhere from one quilt per week to as many as 300 quilts or more per year. Quilting 200 or 300 quilts in one year at our average price of \$180 would make a very nice income.

Quilting Categories	Quilt width	Quilt height	Charge per square inch	Number of quilts per month	Income per quilt	Income per month	Income per year
Overall Quilting	90	100	\$0.02	4	\$180	\$720	\$8,640
Custom Quilting	90	100	\$0.035	4	\$315	\$1,260	\$15,120
Heirloom Quilting	90	100	\$0.06	4	\$540	\$2,160	\$25,920