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CENTRE FOR HEALTH JOURNALISM

General election 2024: What parties' manifestos say about health issues

Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF)

The party's full, original manifesto is [here](#).

Our breakdown is below.

Health issue	What the manifesto means
Universal access to healthcare (including health facilities and services)	The EFF says it is committed to achieving universal health coverage (giving everyone access to the same package of free basic health services, free of charge) and its government will expand maternal, child and teen health services, as well as sex education, lifesaving surgery and "undisrupted access to essential medicines". Universal health coverage is a 2030 sustainable development goal . The EFF will focus on groups such as the poor, women, people with disabilities, the elderly, sex workers, disabled and gender-diverse people, who often face discrimination at health facilities. The party's manifesto doesn't give details of how it will implement universal health coverage, but they did table a Private Members Bill in 2020, the National Health Amendment Bill , which said in order to give everyone the healthcare they need, all public health facilities need to operate 24 hours a day and seven days a week. The

health department [responded](#) saying a detailed cost analysis would first need to be done, as the proposal holds massive financial implications.

About healthcare facilities, the EFF says the following:

- The party will build more clinics. If they are elected into power, the party says there will be at least one clinic per ward by 2028 ([SA has 4 468 municipal wards](#) and the country had [3 506 public primary healthcare facilities by May 2023](#)), which means the EFF would need to build at least 962 new facilities between June 2024 and December 2028; this works out to about 17 clinics per month.
- The party will establish a primary healthcare facility in each school ([by the end of 2022, SA had 24 871 schools](#) — 22 589 public and 2 282 private). Currently, public schools are served by an [integrated school health system](#), which involves health teams, mostly nurses, visiting schools for screenings of certain types of diseases, immunisation and deworming, and sexual and reproductive health services, but permanent, onsite facilities are rare; private schools have informal systems. This means that the EFF will essentially have to build a facility for close to 25 000 schools. The party doesn't give a date by when these facilities need to be completed. In addition, the EFF also says it will set up "residential clinics" for students at tertiary training facilities (many institutions already have onsite clinics [via campus health services](#)).
- An EFF government will, by 2026, have reliable backup power supply in all health facilities. By 2027, every hospital will have its own taxi and bus terminal, and by 2028 all hospitals will have a forensic lab and all roads around public healthcare facilities will be paved. The EFF will build specialist dental, tuberculosis, diabetes, heart and lung disease hospitals. Each district ([South Africa has 52 health districts](#)) will have a specialist hospital, which will be open 24 hours a day and seven days a week. Big companies will be legally compelled to contribute to the building of healthcare facilities and all hospitals and clinics will have high-speed internet.

- Health facilities will be allowed to procure their own supplies (currently they have to go through provincial governments).

About health workers and training, the EFF says the following:

- They will appoint all community health workers (field health workers who normally live in the community they serve and who do [basic screening, prevention and medicine adherence work](#)) as full-time government employees with pension and leave benefits ([currently most are employed by NGOs and without benefits](#)). The same will apply to security guards, cleaners, drivers and general workers at health facilities. The party doesn't provide a timeline for this.
- All funded, vacant positions in public hospitals and clinics will be filled by June 2025. (In other words, if the EFF is elected into power, it will fill all positions within a year. In 2021, South Africa had a [20% vacancy rate for doctor positions in government clinics and a 14% vacancy rate for such posts in state hospitals](#); around 15 474 doctors worked in the public sector in 2020). The EFF will establish a nursing and medical school in each province (many private nursing colleges [were closed down](#) over the past few years).
- By 2027, all medical schools will have to include courses on traditional medicine in their curriculums. All district hospitals will have consulting rooms for traditional health practitioners (no timeline is given for this) and traditional healers will be part of the primary healthcare system. Health facilities will be allowed to procure their own supplies (currently they have to go through provincial governments).

About health services, the EFF says the following:

- More midwives and doulas will be trained to support women giving birth (however, the manifesto doesn't say how many more nor does it give a baseline for the number of midwives in South Africa at the moment). The party will introduce home visits for all pregnant women, but doesn't specify how often visits would take place during a pregnancy, or say how much such efforts will cost and where the money will come from.

- [Free gender-affirmative healthcare](#) treatment will be available to everyone who needs it at any health facility and the process for changing someone's gender stipulated on their ID document will be sped up. In addition, the party will give all South Africans free vaccinations, which will include both routine childhood and travel vaccinations (the health department does currently [provide free childhood vaccinations](#), but the country's vaccination rate, which was [82.2% in 2023](#) for babies 12 months of age, is below the World Health Organisation's [required 95%](#) coverage against vaccine-preventable diseases). The party says it will also ensure everyone has access to gender-based violence and femicide services.
- State-owned pharmaceutical and healthcare equipment production companies will be set up and the use of cannabis for medical treatment will be explored. They will also put in place an e-filing system, which will link all healthcare facilities' records by 2025 (currently only a small part of the public health system uses e-filing, as opposed to a paper-based system). These measures, the party says, will create 4 000 jobs, of which just over half will go to women and young people.
- The EFF will produce sanitary products locally and hand them out for free at health facilities and public schools by 2025. No budget is provided for this.
- An EFF government will fund [harm reduction projects](#), such as clean needle programmes and [opioid substitution therapy](#) (for instance, [methadone replacement](#)) for people who use drugs.
- Unhealthy foods will have to be sold with nutrition warnings on their packaging. All food for school feeding schemes, hospitals and prisons would have to be procured from historically excluded farmers in the area where the facility is based.
- If voted into power, the EFF will ensure that every school in South Africa has clean water by 2026, as well as a gym fitted with sports equipment. No date is given for when gyms will be in place.
- Ambulances and mobile clinics will be manufactured locally.

Climate change

The EFF government will reduce carbon emissions by 10% by 2029. The [Paris Agreement](#), for which South Africa signed up, [requires countries to reduce carbon emissions by 45% by 2030](#) — the EFF says it will renegotiate [South Africa's portion of such targets](#). By 2050, the world needs to achieve "[net zero](#)". This [means](#) the amount of greenhouse gases we emit (which mostly comes from burning coal, oil and gas for producing electricity or fuelling vehicles) balances out with the amount the Earth's ecosystems can naturally absorb so that there's no build-up of these gases [in the atmosphere where they form a layer which traps heat](#) and results in the Earth heating up. The net zero goal has been set to keep global warming, as a result of too many greenhouse gases emitted into the air, to a level at which the Earth continues to be liveable. An EFF government will fine industrial carbon polluters (companies burning oil, gas and coal), introduce carbon taxes and reward businesses who use clean energy and recycle water with a special tax incentive. It will provide schools and communities with saplings (young trees) to plant (to capture carbon).

The EFF will "immediately stop" the decommissioning of coal power stations and will invest at least R4-billion by 2026 in "[carbon emission control technologies](#)" to make emissions from coal-powered stations less harmful. The party will develop "clean coal and oil" by 2025 and, in the process, it says, create 2 000 jobs, of which half will go to women and young people. The effects of climate change — [a hotter Earth and more droughts and storms](#) — will [increase lung diseases](#), and make [HIV](#) and [TB spread faster](#), and allow [diseases transmitted by insect hosts](#), such as malaria, to spread to countries where they've never been experienced before.

The EFF says it will create 1-million "climate jobs" to help South Africa move from relying mostly on coal-fired electricity to a "fair mix" of energy sources in the form of fossil fuels, nuclear power and renewable energy. It will build a nuclear power plant to increase the amount of electricity South Africa can generate and fund Eskom to research and develop training workshops for coal-fired and nuclear energy generation. It will also help Eskom to develop a renewable energy division to generate electricity, and by 2026, establish a satellite

	<p>campus of the University of Cape Town's Faculty of Engineering and the Built Environment in the Northern Cape's ZF Magcawu District Municipality (the seat of the municipality is Upington), which will focus on renewable energy. By 2028, the EFF will have a programme in place to put solar panels in all homes. By 2025, the EFF government will have created 2 500 new jobs (half will go to women and young people) through establishing a renewable energy research and development centre.</p> <p>By 2025, the party says, each household, factory, farm and school will have access to clean water. By 2029, no plastic bags will be distributed in South Africa.</p>
<p>Food security</p>	<p>The EFF will provide monthly food packages and free electricity and water to needy families, in addition to social grants. The party will make more staple foods VAT free, but doesn't name the items. By 2025, it will give all learners in South African schools two free meals a day (including during school holidays). By that year, the EFF government will also have capped the price of food sold at tertiary training institutions.</p> <p>The EFF will launch state-led, urban vertical farming. (Vertical farming grows crops on top of each other in stacked layers, rather than in conventional, horizontal rows. Vertical farming requires less water and land than traditional farming, which is good for the environment, but because it's done inside buildings in controlled environments, it uses a lot of energy for things like special lights and air conditioning, which, in turn, releases a lot of carbon, which could harm the environment.)</p>
<p>Social grants</p>	<p>An EFF government will double most social grants to reduce poverty, by increasing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● state pensions from R2 180 per month (for people between 60 and 74 years of age) and R2 200 per month (for people 75 years and older) to R4 180 per month (the party doesn't differentiate between the two different age groups in its manifesto); ● grants for war veterans from R2 200 to R4 220 per month;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● disability grants from R2 180 to R4 180 per month; ● care dependency grants from R2 180 to R4 180 per month; ● child foster grants from R1 180 to R2 260 per month; ● child support grants from R530 to R1 020 per month; ● and "grant-in-aid grants" from R510 to R1 020 per month. <p>Grants will be processed by a state-owned bank. No budget or timeline is provided in the EFF's manifesto. (The baseline amounts of grants stated in the EFF manifesto have been updated to the actual, current amounts.)</p>
Basic income grant	A basic income grant is not mentioned, but all recipients of social grants will receive free water and electricity. Grants will be processed by a state-owned bank.
Tuberculosis	The EFF says it will allocate more funding for gender-based violence (GBV), HIV, TB and diabetes research, but doesn't specify how much more. The party will increase the sentences for perpetrators of GBV, murder and rape, and anyone who defrauds the state, but it doesn't specify by how many years or what type of sentence. The EFF says it will have zero tolerance for police brutality and corruption.
HIV	
Corruption	
Gender-based violence	