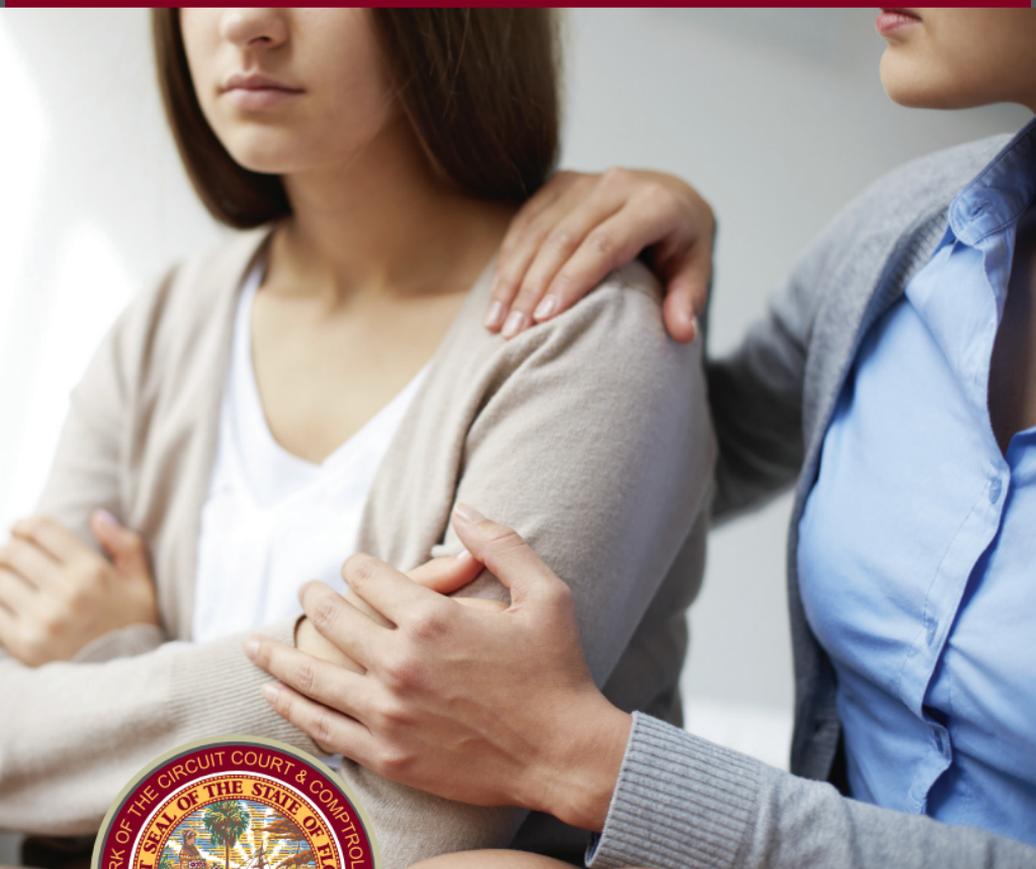


# BAKER ACT: AN EX PARTE PETITION FOR INVOLUNTARY EXAMINATION

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Also called an Ex Parte Baker Act, a Baker Act is a means of providing individuals with emergency services and temporary detention for mental health evaluation and treatment when required.

**KEN BURKE, CPA**  
**CLERK OF THE CIRCUIT COURT**  
**AND COMPTROLLER**  
**PINELLAS COUNTY, FLORIDA**

# BAKER ACT

An Ex Parte Petition for Involuntary Examination (Baker Act) may be filed if there is reason to believe that a person is mentally ill and because of his or her mental illness:

- the person has refused voluntary examination and/or is unable to determine whether an examination is necessary,
- the person is likely to suffer from neglect and the refusal could threaten his or her well-being, or
- a substantial likelihood that without care or treatment, the person will cause serious bodily harm to him/herself or others in the near future.

The person must be in Pinellas County and his/her whereabouts must be known; the person cannot be in jail.

A Baker Act can be filed by anyone who completes a petition, as sworn written testimony, describing the person's actions which they observed and which they believe meet the above listed criteria.

Completion of the petition is a request of the court to order the person's involuntary transportation to and examination at a designated mental health facility.

If the court finds the criteria have been met, a court order will be issued authorizing the Sheriff to pick up and transport the person to the nearest designated facility. A psychiatrist must examine the person within 72 hours to determine if they need involuntary placement for treatment of mental illness. If they do, the facility will petition the court for a hearing within 72 hours.

There is no filing fee required to file a Petition for Involuntary Examination (Baker Act). You may request, complete and file a Petition for Involuntary Examination Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., at the Clerk's Clearwater Courthouse, St. Petersburg Branch and North County Branch locations.

For more information, call Probate Court Records at (727) 464-3321 or visit [www.mypinellasclerk.org](http://www.mypinellasclerk.org).

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*Persons with disabilities requiring reasonable accommodations to use the services provided should call (727) 464-4062 (TDD or Voice). Call 24 hours prior to coming to the courthouse.*

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